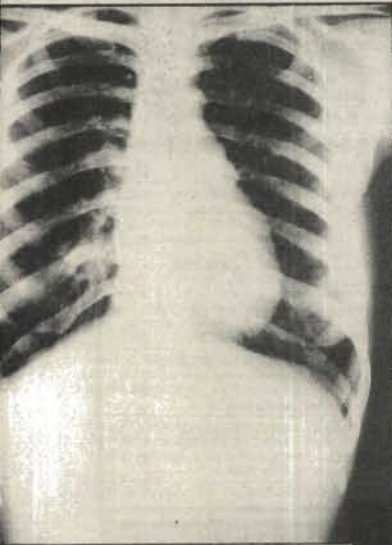


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Your files in their hands

Supplement on official secrets and civil liberties



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Public office, private gain

IN THE FIRST ever issue of the *New Statesman* in 1913 George Bernard Shaw wrote a leading article about the Marconi scandal. In that scandal, to use the words of a letter sent by Peter Shore to the Prime Minister last week, 'the public duties and private interests of some Ministers had become dangerously intertwined'. As a result Prime Minister Asquith set out principles that should in future guide British ministers. They included the principle that:

no Minister is justified under any circumstances in using official information . . . for his own private profit or for that of his friends.

Since then the doctrine has been amplified by the 1952 statement by Prime Minister Churchill that ministers 'must so order their affairs that no conflict arises, or *appears to arise*, between their private and their public duties'.

By any test, if she continues to refuse to make a statement about the Oman/Mark Thatcher affair, Mrs Thatcher will have lowered standards in public life. There was clearly on the face of it an identity of interest between the public duty of the Prime Minister in 'batting for Britain' to get the Oman university contract in 1981 and the private interest of her son.

At first it was just a question of whether or not Mrs Thatcher responded to a running story in the *Observer*. Now she has been asked a series of serious questions by a senior and responsible member of the Opposition. If she now persists in refusing to make any substantive reply, she will be reintroducing the corrupt doctrine that Ministers and Prime Ministers are not required to answer in public for their financial relationships with relatives and close friends.

No one supposes that Mrs Thatcher has been personally involved in corrupt financial gain of the sort that marked the Asquith and Lloyd George Liberal governments. But the Foreign Office, the Department of Trade and the rest of Whitehall have in the recent past had to wrestle with the moral and practical problems of supporting export and contract business in parts of the Third World where you either turn a blind eye to hefty 'commission' payments, or you don't get the business. They have tried to claim that the payment of large sums of money for bribery or influence cannot officially be condoned.

Yet here on the face of it is a most embarrassing episode. Mark Thatcher knows nothing about the Middle East and even less about large-scale construction projects. There can be only one reason why he was taken on in any capacity by the Middle East representative of a British construction company – namely to peddle influence, or to persuade others that he had the capacity to peddle influence.

There is only one kind of influence that Mark Thatcher had it in him even to pretend to peddle. It was and is his relationship with his mother. There are, therefore, to put it at its absolute lowest, questions for Mrs Thatcher to answer about Oman – and inferences to be drawn, if she continues to refuse to answer them.

SCANDALS that won't lie down usually have a common characteristic. In their first stage those under attack simply assert that there is no truth in any aspect of what is being

alleged. If that line cannot be held, they begin to be evasive. In the end they get trapped in the direct lie. There is a strong sense that Peter Shore has succeeded in moving Mrs Thatcher from stage 1 to stage 2 of this process. For the fact is that Mrs Thatcher has changed her story. Any tyro investigator knows that there is usually something odd afoot when that happens.

Mrs Thatcher is not the only party to the Oman episode whose story has changed. Cementation – the construction company involved – at first firmly denied in London that it had no business connection of any kind with Mark Thatcher over the Omani deal, or in any other context. That line was blown by Thatcher himself in his extraordinarily revealing interview last week in the *Sunday Times*.

No explanation of any kind has so far been offered as to why Cementation and its parent company, Trafalgar House, were unaware that the Prime Minister's son had done such effective work for them. Trafalgar's chairman, Nigel Broakes, is one of the small group of businessmen on close personal terms with Mrs Thatcher, which makes it all the more surprising. He is involved in the highly political negotiations about taking over Scott Lithgow for a knock-down price. If it is really true that no one at Trafalgar or Cementation in London was told about Mark Thatcher, why was this the case?

But the most important shift of position remains Mrs Thatcher's. When the story first broke, it was said that she had merely 'batted for Britain'. Since there was only one British company involved, this was in no way an improper use of influence on behalf of Cementation. Even on this basis it would have been perfectly possible to declare that Mark had an interest in the contract. But now, in her last letter to Peter Shore, she is saying something importantly different.

In accordance with the advice of the relevant Departments, I raised with the Oman Government the interest of Britain in playing a major role in all aspects of the new University – consultancy, construction and academic. I did not mention Cementation or any other company.

So Mrs Thatcher, it now seems, was *not* batting for any specific British commercial interest, but just for the Union Jack in general. A curiously imprecise and uncharacteristic batting style for Mrs Thatcher.

And her precise choice of words is worth close study. For example, if she did not breathe the word Cementation while in Oman in 1981, did she breathe the words Mark Thatcher? And what is this new division of the new University project into three parts – consultancy, construction and academic? The Ministry of Overseas Development could have briefed the Prime Minister on the consultancy and academic aspects of the project. Did the Department of Trade brief her on the construction possibilities – or did her information on this come from elsewhere?

If Mrs Thatcher was simply carrying out her public duties and Mark Thatcher his private ones without any improper overlap, then there are quite simple answers to questions of this sort. Until the Prime Minister is persuaded to give them, her government will be haunted by other suggestions. □

Anglo-French unions join to save jobs at multinational

THE EFFORTS of two left-wing local councils — one English, the other French — look set to help trade unionists bring their multinational employer to the negotiating table.

Union representatives from Eastman Kodak will turn up at the company's London headquarters for a meeting with management on 24 February. And if the company refuses to see them, the 'meeting' will turn into a protest rally against Kodak.

The move marks a year of cautious encouragement for the Kodak unions by the Labour-controlled Greater London Council and the Communist-Socialist coalition that makes up the regional government of Val de Marne, one of the so-called 'red belt' councils near Paris.

The unions fear that Kodak's policy of international rationalisation will lead to massive redundancies throughout Europe. In 1983 Kodak shed 7,500 jobs in the United States alone. And the company has reduced its workforce in Britain by a third since 1973.

Kodak Pathé, the French operation of the multinational, has announced the closure of its historic 'Cine City' factory and research centre at Vincennes with the loss of 2,300 jobs. And at least 200 staff are currently earmarked for redundancy at Kodak's Hemel Hempstead plant, just north of London.

Alarmed at the trend, the Val de Marne regional government and the Greater London Council helped convene a meeting of Kodak trade unionists from Britain and France.

This established the European Standing Committee of Kodak Trade Unions, which held its second conference in November.

Delegates to the conference agreed a seven-point programme of demands for the protection of jobs and manufacturing capacity to be put simultaneously to all Kodak's national managements in Europe. But one of the unions' biggest problems is what they call the 'black hole' in the European chain of command in multinationals.

As one delegate put it: 'Policy directives and decisions emerge while all attempts at contact simply disappear without trace.' If Kodak refuses to negotiate at a European level, the unions will go direct to the company's headquarters in the United States. The unions' newspaper *Viewfinder* says: 'We feel we can't go on forever relying on Kodak US to push work our way when it suits their purposes.'

'Kodak should understand that if they want to benefit from what is the richest market for their products outside the US they also have a duty to provide jobs within that market.' Kodak has more than half of the European photographic market, worth about £2½ billion and the company employs 26,500 workers in Europe.

Kodak makes no secret of the fact that the recession, and increased Japanese competition, is eating into its profits. In the mid-1970s it launched its rationalisation programme. But the unions are concerned at the lack of investment in new electronic technologies in Europe — the company seems to be

withdrawing back into the United States.

The involvement of the local councils, at the initiative of the Kodak workers at Vincennes, has bridged traditional political divisions and 'cold-war' attitudes in the unions' own international channels. Some of the unions involved are affiliated to the World Federation of Trade Unions, the main international secretariat body in Eastern Europe, while others are affiliated to the Western-bloc International Confederation of Free Trade Unions.

Phil Blackburn, of the Greater London Council Economic Policy Group, says the councils have provided administrative and research facilities to help get the different unions together.

'As separate unions in different countries, the Kodak workers have little power', he said. 'The local authorities have played a supporting role rather than substituting for trade union functions.'

Graham Smith

staff and we're hoping to improve that.'

But he denied that those with low arrest rates would be weeded out. 'We are interviewing the officers to assess whether they have the necessary skills to do the job. Some of them were transferred to these duties a long time ago for the wrong reasons and we have to make sure they're suitable.'

Christian Wolmar

BR can't settle on the Settle

BRITISH Rail was running down the scenic Settle to Carlisle railway line well over a year before it publicly announced that it wanted to close the line.

In the middle of the line is the spectacular Ribbleshead viaduct. BR says this will cost £6 million to replace, although objectors to the closure say it could be repaired for less.

BR formally announced its intention to close the line last year, although formally no final decision will be made until after a public inquiry later this year. In January 1982 a senior group of railway managers met to discuss running down the line. The main proposal was to divert inter-city trains from Nottingham to Glasgow to run via Manchester and Carlisle, instead of Leeds. A rump service from Leeds to Carlisle was left to run over the Settle line. This device limited objectors geographically to the towns at either end of the line, and removed objections from people in Nottingham and Glasgow, who might complain about slower train services.

The minutes of the meeting record: 'There is general agreement that closure of the line must be progressed. This view . . . is that the proposal should remain confidential until the through passenger services have been diverted in May 1982, as otherwise this diversion could be barred until completion of the statutory procedures.'

One of the uses of the Settle to Carlisle line is as a diversion when the main line from London to Carlisle is closed for maintenance. The alternative diversion is a circuitous line round the Cumbrian coast. The minutes say it will cost £1.5 million to make this line suitable for diverted trains to Carlisle.

Despite the care taken to plan the closure, posters have just gone up exhorting passengers from London, Liverpool and Manchester to buy an awayday on 'England's greatest historical scenic route.' Pamphlets advertising the bargain trips say the Settle to Carlisle line is 'the most spectacular main line in England.'

Mick Hamer

Community police arrest too few

THE MUCH-PUBLICISED community policing scheme in Brixton is in jeopardy following a restructuring aimed at weeding out officers with low arrest rates. Home beat officers, many with several years experience, are being asked to re-apply for their jobs which have been renamed 'permanent beat officer' posts.

Home beat officers are based in a specific area and are expected to get to know local people through earning their trust. The scheme has been a vital part of the more low-key policing approach adopted after the Brixton riots in 1981. There has been a huge drop in reported crime figures in Brixton in the last two years.

Because the emphasis is on 'community policing', the arrest rates of home beat officers are lower than that of their colleagues. This, and the fact that they work a regular nine to five shift, has led to friction between the home beat officers and other police who sometimes regard them as social workers in uniform.

Tony Morgan, a member of the Lambeth Community Police Consultative Group, asked the police at this week's meeting of the Group: 'Why should officers with long experience have to go through an interview process just to stay in the same job?' Chief Superintendent Tony Speed replied that there had been failings in the home beat system. 'For example, home beat officers have complained that they have not been listened to by senior

Michael Ward: Chair of the Industry and Employment Committee addresses French and British Kodak workers at the GLC in November 1983



Higher rates if Big 7 go

ABOLISHING the metropolitan counties could add up to £60 million to the rates bills in the big cities, according to a report by accountants Coopers and Lybrand, which was published this week.

The government plans to abolish the six metropolitan county councils (Greater Manchester, Merseyside, South Yorkshire, Tyne and Wear, West Midlands and West Yorkshire) and the Greater London Council. Ministers claimed that abolishing the metropolitan counties would save £120 million a year and cut 9,000 jobs, while the report, commissioned by the threatened councils, says 1,400 more jobs will be created. Even on the assumptions most favourable to the government, says the report, the savings will be minimal.

The consultants calculated two sets of figures. The first assumed that the district councils would co-operate with each other. On this basis the report says that there would be savings of between £6 million and £12 million, with some 500 jobs disappearing. However, these minimal savings, which fall within the accounting error on the metropolitan counties' annual budget of £1,600 million, are overshadowed by the transitional costs, which will be between £50 million and £90 million. Spreading these once and for all costs over a ten-year period therefore produces a net loss, despite the jobs savings, of

between £4 million and £10 million.

However, if district councils behave competitively or unco-operatively (especially where they have political differences) then the cost of abolition will be between £11 million and £21 million a year. The number of jobs in local government will increase by between 1,200 and 1,400. And the transitional cost would be between £150 million and £240 million.

Coopers and Lybrand says that the higher figures are the more realistic because there will only be limited co-operation between the small councils. 'We think that, in practice, the outcome would be likely to be somewhere between these two points, and probably nearer the 'limited' end of this range.'

Mick Hamer

Drips and leaks

THE INSTITUTION of Professional Civil Servants (IPCS), which spends much of its time protecting those who have leaked official documents, is now trying to discover which of its members leaked a copy of a draft IPCS report on nuclear safety. A circular went out last week to members of the national executive committee asking the culprit to own up. But like most leak inquiries, this one is unlikely to be successful.

The draft report, which casts doubt on the safety of the American-style pressurised water reactor (PWR) planned for Sizewell in Suffolk,



Bill McCall: apparently furious at the leak

was received by the *New Statesman* at the end of last year (NS 30 December 1983). Friends of the Earth submitted a copy of it to the Sizewell Public Inquiry, thinking that they might use it as a basis for cross examination. When the IPCS realised this, it asked whether the Inspector Sir Frank Layfield could prohibit discussion of the document. Told that this was not possible, IPCS then wrote to Layfield pointing out that the document was confidential and disassociating itself from any reference to it at the Inquiry.

National executive members attribute IPCS's overreaction to the attitude of their general secretary Bill McCall, who was apparently furious at the leak. The reason that the report has not been published as expected is that IPCS members in the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate are concerned about some

'technical inaccuracies'. When these have been sorted out the report is likely to be released, in a slightly amended form.

Ironically, Friends of the Earth have now decided not to refer to the document at the Inquiry as they do not believe it says anything particularly new or interesting. FoE have submitted at least three other confidential nuclear industry documents which call into question some of the key safety assumptions used by the Central Electricity Generating Board. They acquired one (British) document under the US Freedom of Information Act, and, much to the consternation of the industry, were leaked the other two. Clearly the substantial body of opinion within the nuclear industry sceptical of PWRs is finding ways of being heard.

Rob Edwards

MISCELLANY

Uphill struggle

Sad to relate the end of anti-crash helmet campaigner Fred Hill, who died during his 31st stay in Pentonville prison. The 74-year-old retired schoolmaster was sentenced to 60 days' imprisonment - his heaviest sentence yet - for refusing to pay fines for not wearing a crash helmet. In the 1960s Hill pursued a one-person vendetta against the government's attempt to increase teacher's pension contributions by

1 per cent. After the NUT settled he took legal action against NUT officials. During his last spell in prison he had already tangled with prison officers over the confiscation of his personal diary - a case taken up by the Tory MP Terry Dicks, who is now introducing a private members' Bill to repeal the compulsory crash helmet law. The final twist is continued in an obituary in the *Teacher*: Hill had always worn a crash helmet until it was made compulsory.

Force of habit

Nearly three years after the formation of the SDP, many loose ends are still embedded in the Labour Party. Shirley Williams's standing order (for £1 a month) to the Labour Party still hasn't been cancelled. And born-again SDP councillor Bob Lewis, of Hillingdon, was invited to the annual general meeting of the Labour Co-ordinating Committee last month. This was after the 'revelation' in the *NS* that Lewis had voted in the LCC's elections last year which prompted LCC membership officer Alan

Hayworth to write to Lewis telling him he was being obliterated from the membership lists. Lewis wasn't able to go to the agm, but said that he 'would have been rather interested in some items on the agenda, such as Labour's strategy for the Euro-elections'.

Youth of today

When a reader protested to the Youth Hostels Association, saying she wouldn't renew her membership because it banks with Barclays, they sent her a pamphlet to give her 'some information on the other side of the story'. The pamphlet is called 'Barclays in South Africa: the Case for Constructive Engagement', and is actually produced by Barclays. Anti-apartheid campaigners say they have seen Barclays employees handing out the same pamphlet at their pickets and demonstrations, but have never heard of other organisations doing Barclays' PR for them. The YHA said: 'We feel it's only fair to allow Barclays to state their case. It doesn't mean that we

endorse Barclays' position.' As the YHA is a democratic organisation, what about allowing the opposing view to be put? 'Well, all our 250,000 members know we bank with Barclays, because that's who they have to pay their money to. I dare say if there was an enormous groundswell of opinion, we would change. But we only get four members a year at most complaining about it.'

Levelling up

The paper that launched a thousand investigative journalists is rising from the ashes. The *Leveller*, which folded under a mountain of debt in February last year, is being relaunched this Saturday, 25 February. The company, The Leveller Magazine (1979) Ltd kept itself alive by running a typesetting business. The rump of the collective, Sarah Gellner and Richard Reeve, say they have now paid off the debts and are holding an open relaunch meeting at 2pm in ASTMS head office, 79 Camden Road, London NW1. Ring 01-274 2288 for details.



Bradford pupils hold protest walk-out

TWO HUNDRED and fifty pupils walked out of Wyke Manor Upper School, Bradford, on 13 February, and remained out for two hours, demanding the dismissal of one teacher and the disciplining of two others for violence against pupils. They returned to classes after receiving headteacher Carlton Duncan's assurance that their allegations would be documented and investigated and there would be no victimisation for the walkout. The following day, 62 pupils made written and signed statements. Mr Duncan, who is Bradford's first black headmaster, said that their allegations are 'very serious'.

According to 15 of the pupils involved, certain teachers have punched them in their faces, slapped them around their heads, pushed them to the floor and ripped their clothing. Furthermore, pupils allege, certain incidents were reported to the authorities by parents some months ago. Legal action is now being considered by parents against two teachers. Bradford's Education Department has promised a 'fast and thorough inquiry'. This week Bradford Community Relations Council and the Council's Race Relations Advisory Group will discuss the school.

Pupils have vehemently attacked claims made by the NUT, *Daily Mail*, and the Home Office Minister for Immigration, David Waddington, speaking to a meeting of Bradford Asians, that the walkout was organised by outside 'extremists' and agitators, primarily the Revolutionary Communist Group and the Bradford West Indian Community Centre Association. They also dismiss as a 'red herring', the NUT and media claim that racism in the schools prompted the walkout of pupils, about one-fifth of whom were Asian or Afro-Caribbean in background, the rest white.

However, they do concede that racism is part of the school's problem and complain bitterly that a popular supply teacher, Mr Chris Perry, after publicly releasing a dossier of racist remarks alleged to have been made by white teachers about the school's black headteacher, was physically ejected from the school by Education Department officials, and was then arrested for breach of the peace.

At a press conference held in Bradford's West Indian Community Centre, pupils repeated their allegations and claimed that following the walkout pupils had been victimised, including 'shadowing' by teachers and threats of detention because of the 'truancy' of the walkout. However, as Mr Duncan

assured the *New Statesman*, 'I can guarantee you that there will be no detentions at this school in relation to the demonstration.'

The press conference ejected the Bradford NUT secretary, Ian Murch, and two other teachers. Mr Murch stated: 'I think that there were 62 statements made because after people had gone into the school in order to incite pupils to take part in a demonstration they were then offered the opportunity to make statements, and many of them made them because they thought it justified them taking part in the demonstration.'

Dave Harrison

Brighton bobbies get a watchdog

BRIGHTON looks set to be the first local authority outside London to establish a police committee despite the opposition of the ruling Tory group, and - unlike London - an official police authority for the county.

Dissatisfaction with the Sussex Police Authority and a desire to see more discussion of police matters in the town led the Labour Group on the council to propose a town police committee. Because the council is 'hung' and one of the Tories was away, the motion was carried, with the support of the four Alliance councillors. Now its terms of reference are being worked out by council staff.

Steve Bassam, deputy leader of the Labour Group, told the *New Statesman*: 'We see this as an initiative that can be taken up by councils across the country. The police authority is remote and undemocratic as a third of its members are unelected magistrates. We want to see the police made more accountable and this is a way of doing it.' The police are not obliged to consult with, or speak to such police committees.

Brighton Tory leader Bob Christofoli says that his group will boycott the committee. 'It's just a police bashing exercise. 'We're not a police authority and it's nothing to do with us. They'll be wanting to discuss Guatemala next.' He pointed out that there is already a police consultative committee but it meets behind closed doors.

There are at present a dozen police committees in London, all set up by Labour-controlled authorities.

Christian Wolmar

100 homeless families face mass eviction

COUNCILS placing their homeless families in bed and breakfast accommodation should take heed of the lesson currently being learnt by the borough of Tower Hamlets in London's East End. As the result of a disagreement with a private hotel chain, the council may find itself having to house 600 homeless people at 24 hours' notice.

The trouble started two weeks ago in Finsbury Park, North London - an area traditionally used by several London boroughs as a dumping-ground for homeless people. Tower Hamlets has 106 families staying in hotels - mostly converted private houses owned by the local Maryland chain. But after two Tower Hamlets clients, Mr and Mrs Rahman, were allegedly assaulted and threatened by hotel employees, the Housing Committee decided to stop using one of the hotels, and informed the management accordingly. The hotel denies that violence was used.

The Maryland proprietor, Andreas Thrasyvoulou, also known as Andreas Stevens, then let the committee know that he may not be willing to accommodate any more

Tower Hamlets families. Although bed and breakfast clients are classified as hotel guests, not tenants, council officials have accepted responsibility for them and could be called on to rehouse all the Maryland guests - nearly 600 people - overnight.

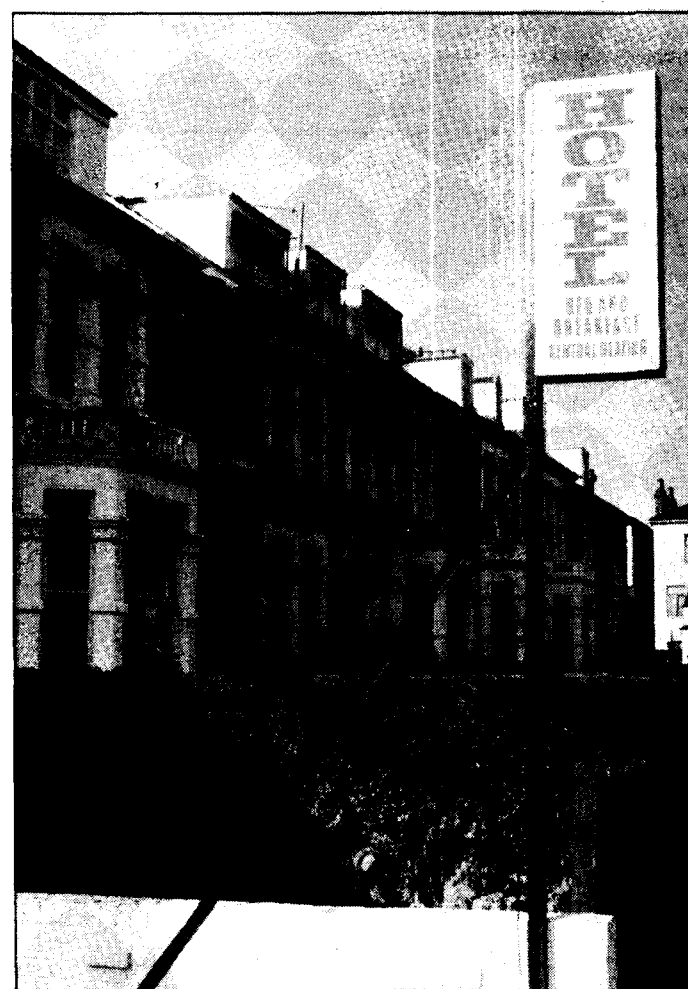
The council took out a court order preventing a mass eviction for seven days, and are currently working on contingency plans which involve putting people up in schools and public buildings. Tower Hamlets currently has 9,000 people on its housing waiting list and 5,000 on its transfer list.

The homeless people, most of whom are Bengali, are furious. At a meeting in Finsbury Park on Monday, they rounded on Tower Hamlets housing chair Christopher Rackley, accusing the council of racism in its housing allocation policy.

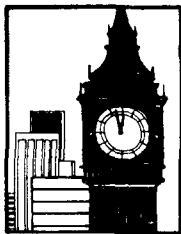
Tower Hamlets now finds itself in an invidious position, acknowledging that hotel accommodation is completely inadequate for homeless people, but fearing that the alternatives will be much worse. As one of the speakers commented at the Monday meeting: 'If we find that 106 families are on the street on Thursday, we are going to turn Tower Hamlets Town Hall into a homeless accommodation centre.'

Steve Elsworth

Converted private house: traditionally used as a dumping-ground for homeless families



Nick Fielding/Reef



PETER KELLNER Political Editor

Tony Benn versus the clowns from central casting

VICTOR ZORZA, the *Guardian's* Kremlin watcher from the mid-1950s to the mid-1970s (and one of the few journalists to predict the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968) was once asked to recall his worst misjudgment. 'The Hungarian uprising in 1956', he replied; 'I went to Budapest and was intoxicated by the atmosphere. I thought it would succeed. If I had stayed in London reading *Pravda* and *Izvestia*, I would have known it would fail.'

Judging a by-election presents much the same problem: visiting the place provides ample evidence of atmosphere, the anecdotal views of 'real' voters, and the horrors of the media circus. It is possible to be right about what is happening, but easy to be wrong. Give me a computer print-out from a well-conducted opinion poll any day.

After visiting Chesterfield this week, I confess to having no clear view who will win. In so far as a trek round two traditional Labour-voting housing estates confirms and fleshes out recent poll figures, it seems clear that Labour has lost rather than gained support since the general election, and that the choice of Tony Benn as Labour's candidate is the main reason. It is also clear that the Liberal, Max Payne, rather than the Conservative candidate, Nicholas Bourne, is the main beneficiary.

So far the shifts in opinion are not enough to deny Benn victory. Labour's support is down, but not (yet) haemorrhaging; some Tories are switching tactically to the Liberals, but it is not (yet) a tidal wave. Since past by-elections have turned on voting movements in the last week, the outcome could be anything from a Labour majority of 3,000 to a Liberal victory by 5,000. Beyond that I cannot predict; nor, in truth, can anyone else.

What a visit to the town does show is that if justice and the qualities of the candidates had anything to do with it, Tony Benn should coast to victory. Regular readers of this column will know that its admiration of Benn knows many bounds; and there are important criticisms to be made of Labour's campaign in Chesterfield. But it is worth recording, since few other journalists are doing so, that Benn is running an honest and serious campaign; he never slings mud at the other candidates; he concentrates wholly on policies and political principles; he is careful with his facts; he is even more careful to sustain the image of party unity.

Payne and Bourne present an altogether uglier – and more traditional – face of by-election politics. Both men look as though they have been supplied by central

casting for a low-budget situation comedy. Payne is woolly in both mind and appearance. His agent has prevented him from appearing on the same platform as Benn, believing (rightly) that the TV cameras would show Benn to be a far better candidate. Instead Payne is sent to talk to as many floating voters as possible personally, as his team believes (wrongly) that he comes across well face-to-face. My impression, as I followed him briefly on Monday evening, is that he deterred rather than attracted the doubters he met by his arrogant and overbearing manner.

Roughly twice a week the Liberals distribute *Focus* news sheets. Their main purpose is to knock Benn and to persuade Tories to vote tactically. Their main device is to quote newspaper stories attacking Benn. 'Benn and Left hit new low' ran the main headline over one of last week's *Focuses*. It quoted an opinion poll that 'gives Labour just 30 per cent of the electorate. Eric Varley polled 48 per cent at the general election.' The suggestion that the poll showed an 18 point decline in Labour's support was wholly false. Varley polled 48 per cent of those who voted – but only 35 per cent of the electorate.

CONSERVATIVE DECEPTION is both cruder and more ambitious. As they try to stop their supporters switching tactically to the Liberals they lie recklessly about their canvass returns. On Monday they issued a news sheet strikingly similar in appearance to the Liberals' *Focus*, but called *In touch*. It claimed to show Tory support running at 17,000 on 16 February and 18,000 on 23 February – three days after the news sheet was printed. A claim by a visiting Tory MP at a press conference on Tuesday that Bourne was just 2,000 votes behind Benn was greeted with derisive laughter.

Slightly more serious, and certainly more baffling, was Bourne's claim, in a prepared statement at the same press conference, that taxes would have had to rise by £40 a week in each household in Chesterfield to pay for Labour's promises in last year's election manifesto. I asked Bourne for the source of this figure. 'An independent estimate made last summer which has not been challenged by Labour.' 'What was the independent source?' I asked. 'The Centre for Policy Studies?' interjected Anthony Bevins of *The Times*. 'It wasn't challenged', repeated Bourne. 'But it was challenged', said ITN's Glyn Mathias. 'Do you know the source?', I asked. 'It wasn't challenged' repeated the candidate, with all the blank conviction of a Dalek for whom no fact could disturb a

carefully programmed instruction.

For anyone – journalist or party worker – seasoned by past by-election campaigns, none of these smears or deceptions caused a raised eyebrow, let alone outrage. That, I fear, says more about the routinely squalid character of by-elections and the cynicism of regular participants and observers than it says about the Chesterfield campaign. Benn, to his vast credit, is trying to buck the trend. Where his rivals quote the *Daily Express*, he quotes the Tolpuddle Martyrs. Where Payne and Bourne ask voters to contemplate the best way of beating Benn, Benn invites the people of Chesterfield to contemplate how the tide of humankind's struggle to secure basic democratic rights is now passing through their town.

Without doubt Benn speaks with passion to the cares and ideals of many Labour supporters. The reception he and Neil Kinnock received on Monday evening from an audience of 2,000 (including overflow halls) demonstrated that. Those 2,000 people, however, are not the electors of Chesterfield who matter most. Labour's strategic problem, starting with this by-election, is to reassemble a broad enough coalition of electors to regain power. However honest and elevated Benn's campaign is, it does not properly address itself to that task. Providing the Tory vote does not collapse much below 25 per cent, Benn could win next week by securing 40 per cent of the vote. But 40 per cent in Chesterfield is equivalent to barely 20 per cent support for Labour nationally.

In the housing estates I toured with Labour canvassers – and bearing in mind the health warning at the beginning of this column – I found no evidence that Benn's campaign is reconverting Labour's lost supporters. The problem seems most serious on the older miners' estates where Benn, the Left and Labour's policy towards nuclear weapons are disliked in roughly equal measure.

Benn complains, and with some reason, about the way the media treats him. At a public meeting on Tuesday he said 'It's a great tragedy in Britain that we don't have a free press'. In fact, the media have not been viciously anti-Benn in this by-election. Press reporting has been poor rather than biased. In any case, it is a bad alibi to blame the media for a bad performance. Win or lose next week, Benn's vote will be substantially down on Eric Varley's. And the overwhelming reason is that Benn's elevated, honest and sincere campaign displays little recognition of the scale or nature of Labour's massive electoral task. □

Mandarins at bay

Whitehall has been 'leakier' under this Tory government than ever before. Richard Norton-Taylor examines the way in which Thatcherism has strained the traditional values of bureaucrats

ONE OF THE first Cabinet papers to be leaked after Mrs Thatcher came to power nearly five years ago set out a list of priorities drawn up by Sir John Hoskyns, then head of her policy unit. The list included the heading: 'deprivilege the Civil Service.'

That could have been a signal for a healthy debate among all parties. But Mrs Thatcher, with the prejudices of a *poujadist*, has stuck to a simplistic view. She has applied it with conviction. She has applied it with what Sir Robert Armstrong once described as her 'searchlight mind' and which others, not so close to her, describe as tunnel vision. The Civil Service is perceived by Mrs Thatcher as an entrenched interest group — like the unions, local government, or the National Health Service.

But at least the civil servants are the government's own employees. By her authoritarian tenets, from the permanent secretary in Whitehall down to the humble clerk, they must simply do what they are told. It is not for civil servants to question government policy; they must simply carry it out. This attitude has led to a climate of repression attracting varying degrees of support — but now increasingly a sullen acquiescence — from senior civil servants. It has opened the way to McCarthyism by stealth, aided by the particular amorality of the British pragmatist epitomised by many Whitehall mandarins. It has also set the scene for the politicisation by stealth of the Civil Service.

That Mrs Thatcher's attitude was simplistic was quickly demonstrated when she set an arbitrary figure for cuts in Civil Service staffing. By 1 April, the number of civil servants will have dropped from 732,000 when her administration first came to power, to 630,000 — the lowest total, as Ministers never tire of repeating, since the second world war. It will be heralded as a great achievement. The cuts programme coincided with the efficiency drive promoted by Sir Derek (now Lord) Rayner of Marks and Spencer. Efficiency thus became a synonym for cuts, and vice versa, and cuts became a policy in their own right, without regard for the effect on standards of service.

Faced with these staffing targets, departments were tempted to play with figures — by hiving off Kew Gardens into a kind of quango, the Ministry of Agriculture, for example, could claim it had cut its number of civil servants; the Ministry of Defence simply hived off the Chelsea Hospital into a 'Chelsea Civil Service'.

But the cuts also fit in neatly with the ideology of privatisation, from contracting

out cleaning services to hiving off the Royal Ordnance Factories. This has reduced the government's own wages bill, yet does the hiving of private sector services — whether contractors for the Department of Environment's property services agency or night-shift nurses for London hospitals — cost less? Departments are reluctant to release figures relating to the net savings — if any — from privatisation. In one notable case — housing finance — the government has simply shifted the burden from Whitehall on to local authorities.

Mrs Thatcher and her closest advisers are intent on promoting a new breed of 'modern managers' to the top ranks of the Civil Service. Philistines giving priority to 'cost-consciousness' and with the ability to read balance sheets will take over from those with the intellectual ability to undertake serious policy analysis. They will be the mandarins of the future, managers of Great Britain PLC. Yet, as former mandarins including Lord Bancroft and Sir Douglas Wass and even the former defence secretary, Sir John Nott, have pointed out, you cannot run a country, or look after public welfare, with the profit and loss criterion of a company answerable to a few shareholders.

It is not even as though the new style is applied in an enlightened manner. One senior official describes the government's style as 'macho-management'. Thus in 1981 the government unilaterally tore up the Civil Service pay system. Worse, and almost certainly in breach of international law, it has taken the unprecedented step of banning union membership to the 10,000 GCHQ employees. How, senior officials at the Cabinet Office have asked Lord Gowrie, the Minister supposedly responsible for the Civil Service, can they be expected to train civil servants to be good managers when this happens?

In fact, recruiting staff to train for the top, the administrative level of the civil service, is becoming increasingly difficult. In 1982, only 24 candidates could be found to fill 44 administrative trainee vacancies: last year the Civil Service accepted 47, though there were 60 vacancies. Meanwhile, the middle — executive officer — ranks of the Civil Service are being increasingly filled by graduates: a questioning, self-confident group, very different from the stereotype bureaucrat so commonly caricatured.

THE SENIOR Civil Service is an easy target, with few friends and often its own worst enemy. It has been traditionally secretive, arrogant and disdainful of Parliament from

whose arcane procedures it has benefitted. Mandarins have hidden behind the constitutional fiction of Ministerial responsibility, and enjoyed a protected life in the Whitehall village. 'I actually believe as I get older,' Lord Bancroft said when he was still heading the Civil Service three years ago, 'that life is very much like the Anthony Powell novels in that you keep meeting the same people over and over again but under different circumstances.' As a breed, they also become cynical and fatalistic, overseeing, as one put it, 'the orderly management of decline'.

Senior civil servants are also attracted to a cosy consensus, a kind of corporatism, what they describe as the middle, or common, ground (a majority of senior civil servants would probably favour the Alliance). Lord Bancroft last month said that opposition parties should benefit from public funds. That, he said, would discourage them from drawing up 'often impracticable manifestos.' Sir Douglas Wass, in his Reith Lectures last year, favoured civil servants being temporarily seconded to opposition parties for the same reason.

The prevailing ethos of the Whitehall mandarin is captured well in an essay on 'The Professional Ethic of the Administrator' by Richard Wilding, now the official head of the Office of Arts and Libraries, formerly secretary of the Treasury's public expenditure committee. Try to make sure, he said, that the objectives Ministers set themselves are objectives 'that can in practice be achieved.' It is necessary, he added, for the senior civil servant to withhold from current government policy 'the last ounce of commitment.'

All this is anathema to Mrs Thatcher, a 'conviction politician' who demands total commitment and loyalty. She is also impatient: one of the great weapons of Whitehall is the power to delay.

Mrs Thatcher has shown more personal interest in the appointment of senior civil servants — one of her many powers of patronage — than her predecessors. With the retirement bulge, she has had more opportunity of doing so. It was her decision, against the advice even of her Cabinet Secretary, Sir Robert Armstrong, to appoint Peter Middleton as permanent secretary at the Treasury and Michael Quinlan, former Ministry of Defence expert on nuclear deterrent theory, as permanent secretary at the Department of Employment. She has said proudly that she quickly makes up her mind about people. It was her instinct that led her to appoint Bernard Ingham, once an active



member of the Labour Party and a former spokesman for Tony Benn at the Department of Energy, to be her press secretary. Ingham's aggressive loyalty, his carefree attitude towards the conventions that should govern him as a civil servant, suits her admirably.

For her, the criterion is not a strict politically partisan one; it is a question of attitude and instincts. Her phrase of repute — 'is he one of us?' — implies not only a commitment to government policies and priorities, but the same view of the world, and of the role of the State. Her views go beyond the narrow boundaries of the traditional, assumed consensus. This is a signal for right-wing, authoritarian-leaning, civil servants to assert themselves. And because her personality is such — even Ministerial colleagues say she can put them down with a mere glance — civil servants do not have the courage to give unwelcome advice.

There are some civil servants who relish the new climate in Whitehall. They are those who enjoy drafting detailed civil defence regulations for Britain after a nuclear attack, a regressive Police Bill or Trades Union Bill, or a Data Protection Bill that is deliberately vague when it is not restrictive. They are those who will get the message and use the enormous amount of discretion at their disposal — in the field of immigration or environmental policy, for instance — to adopt an authoritarian or uncaring attitude. This brand of civil servant, with those management consultants bought into Whitehall from outside, also share the Thatcher administration's cavalier attitude to Parliament.

But there is an unprecedented split opening up in Whitehall. For there is also a growing number of senior civil servants who do not like what is going on. They are those who are both furious and dismayed by the government's ban on unions in GCHQ and the manner in which the government took the decision. The Whitehall convention is that you either stomach government policy with degrees of enthusiasm or cynicism, or

you resign. (I have heard civil servants publicly say they would resign only if Britain left the Common Market.)

Now more are asking where their loyalty lies. Thirty-five years ago, Sir Edward Bridges, then permanent secretary at the Treasury, argued that civil servants should be concerned primarily with 'the continued well-being of the State'. Sir William Armstrong, Heath's head of the Civil Service, said that officials should be concerned more with the 'continuity of the realm than for the success of party'. In this tension between ethics and career, how do you define 'the common good of the nation?' Should civil servants maintain loyalty to the Cabinet as a whole, when more and more decisions are taken, not by the Cabinet, but by a handful of Ministers?

These are the fundamental, highly political, questions which more and more civil servants — especially the younger generation of assistant secretaries and below — are asking themselves. They, and even some of the older ones, want less secrecy, though their motives are mixed. Some are worried that Mrs Thatcher will provoke a radical left-wing backlash. Others are deeply concerned about the way this administration takes decisions. They hanker after a more rational and objective decision-making process. It is not bright young Treasury officials, for example, who are blocking a debate about long-term public expenditure, or financial pressures on the welfare state.

ALL ADMINISTRATIONS have been excessively secretive; this government is obsessively so because of its authoritarian assumptions, and because it feels besieged. Frequently it is more concerned with its image than articulating the substance of its policies.

The government claims that it has to take decisions within a small group of Ministers because it is afraid of leaks. But the more secretive the government, as even the First Division Association of senior officials now acknowledges, the greater the likelihood of

leaks which in turn also encourages mistrust between Minister and their officials. It is a vicious circle.

Leaks are not a new Whitehall phenomenon — and anyway, many come from Ministers, most from 10 Downing Street. What is new is that the few which appear to come from civil servants are relentlessly pursued by the government. In the past they have been the object of internal Whitehall inquiries which have either come to nothing or have been discreetly dropped. Now Scotland Yard's serious crimes squad is brought in. 'There are more police in Whitehall than woodworm,' a civil servant said the other day.

Many of the embarrassing leaks, including the *Guardian's* cruise missile paper for which Sarah Tisdall has been charged, have, as another civil servant noted pointedly, highlighted the government's attempts to manage the public response to policy, rather than revealed the substance of policy.

Thus another of the earliest Cabinet paper leaks of the Thatcher administration showed that Ministers, when pressing ahead with the nuclear power programme, should attempt to 'reduce over-sensitivity to environmental concerns'. One of the latest leaks was Bernard Ingham's plans to 'neutralise' Tory Party 'dissidents' in face of opposition to the government's attacks on local authorities. Another recent leak, for which Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth were raided by the police, revealed Whitehall's concern for 'awkward questions' that may be raised in the event of dumping more radioactive waste in the Atlantic.

The screw is tightening within the Civil Service. The government tells prison governors that they cannot comment publicly about conditions in their jails without permission. It points to the staff code which states that they cannot 'be allowed to engage in public discussion of matters of political controversy such as the suitability or otherwise of particular government policies or how these might be changed? Junior civil servants — humble clerks — have been threatened with disciplinary action for helping to organise local CND groups, for criticising government policy in departmental staff newspapers, for writing to their local MP about cuts in their area. Under the new Trades Union Bill, the definition of what is a 'political' act or objective is so broad that Civil Service unions — which are not affiliated to any political party and whose pay and conditions are determined directly by government policy — would find it difficult to protest about anything.

Maybe Mrs Thatcher has taken tips from the US where civil servants are forbidden to take industrial action. It is significant that Reagan wants to extend the use of the lie detector — to be introduced at GCHQ in Cheltenham in April — in Washington and wants federal employees to sign a blanket pledge very similar to the British Official Secrets Acts. The phrase 'national security' — used in the past in the US to cover all kinds of activities even illegal ones — is likely to be used here increasingly as an excuse for new repressive moves, as it has been for the ban on unions at GCHQ. □

Covering up sex

**Women of right and left appear to be united in their desire to outlaw male freedom to buy, or look at pornography.
Annette Kuhn looks at the arguments**

WHEN PORN was discovered among the possessions of the Cambridge rapist it seemed to offer a neat explanation for his crimes. In fact, it certainly did not prove that he raped women as a direct result of using pornography, just as all studies on the link between image and act have been inconclusive. It does suggest, though, that there may be some link in his attitudes and beliefs about women and sexuality. This would not make him exceptional, and this point, in fact, is central to feminist arguments on pornography.

In 1979, the Williams Committee Report on Obscenity and Film Censorship rejected the 'cause-effect' harm argument as a basis for reforms in obscene publications legislation. However, it did accept the view that pornography may be sufficiently harmful in other respects to merit legal restriction. The report makes much of the nuisance caused by public displays of pornography, concluding that 'the principal object of the law should be to prevent certain kinds of material causing offence to reasonable people'. In favouring restriction rather than outright prohibition, the Williams Report adopted a neo-liberal stance of the kind espoused some 20 years earlier in the Wolfenden Report on Homosexual Offences and Prostitution. Both reports assume that there are two separate domains, the public and the private, and argue that the law should concern itself only with the former: the law has no place in private 'moral' decisions.

Such praiseworthy attempts to preserve civil liberties by drawing limits to the scope of legal intervention can, paradoxically, present a threat. Central to the Wolfenden/Williams approach is the notion of 'offence' as a harm justifying legal restriction of that which offends. At the same time, moral judgments which have allegedly been banished often make a covert reappearance, cloaked in the guise of offence to 'reasonable' members of the public. Soliciting by street prostitutes was outlawed on the recommendation of Wolfenden not because it was morally wrong as such but because it was likely to cause offence to the public. However the way public and courts enforce the law reflects the same old moral judgments, not the idea of social harm.

The recommendations of the Williams Committee were more or less ignored by the government to no one's satisfaction. Since the publication of the report a number of laws touching on portrayals of sex have been

enacted. These add to existing Statute and Common Law provisions on indecency and obscenity. The Indecent Displays (Control) Act of 1981, first of all, made the offence of publicly displaying indecent matter punishable by a fine of up to £1,000, or a prison sentence of up to two years, or both. It is left to the courts to decide what is indecent, using the 'offence to reasonable people' test. Children, and adults of susceptible disposition, are to be protected by a warning notice displayed outside premises where 'indecent' material is to be found within.

WHILE THE Williams tone has survived in this measure, more recent legislation and proposed legislation has given way to an increased toughness. This takes the form of a legislative redrawing of the public domain, and an incursion into what is still acknowledged to be the private sphere that may herald the emergence of a newly overt legal moralism.

In 1982, the Cinematograph (Amendment) Act closed a loophole in the 1952

'Unreasonable people' enjoying the scenery



Laurie Sparham/Network

Cinematograph Act which had permitted exhibition of films on unlicensed premises, provided the audience were members of a cinema club. The law now makes all film (and video) exhibitions 'promoted for private gain' liable to censorship. All films watched by adults in commercial cinemas now require a censor's certificate, and all these cinemas must secure a local authority licence in order to trade. The 'Restricted 18' certificate reserved for films shown on premises devoted solely to this type of picture gives some legal sanction to film pornography, but the grounds on which the censor is giving or refusing this certificate are not as yet clear.

For the past three decades, the film censor's efforts have been devoted mainly to the classification of films for young audiences. This new measure reintroduces a thoroughgoing censorship of films for adult audiences. This is the definition of 'public' — subject to regulation, in other words — extended to all premises in which films are shown for profit. (This contrasts with the exemption of working men's and gentlemen's clubs from the Sex Discrimination Act.) And now that, under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act of 1982, local authorities can require the owners of 'sex establishments' to obtain a licence, all premises dealing in sexual representations have effectively been transformed into public places.

In an unprecedented legislative move, the statute defines the relevant materials as those which are 'concerned primarily with the portrayal of, or primarily deal with or relate to, or are intended to stimulate or encourage . . . sexual activity . . .'. The precise content of material to be restricted or prohibited on grounds of indecency or

obscurity has hitherto been left to the courts to decide, a practice which allows changes in attitudes to be taken into account. Extraordinary though it is, this shift into *a priori* definition of the content of representations to be restricted seems to have gone unnoticed.

NOW THAT THE boundaries of the public domain have been redrawn to include shops and cinemas open only to adults, moves are afoot to regulate the home consumption of sexual material. Travelling through Parliament is the Video Recordings Bill to restrict the availability to children of 'video nasties'. On these grounds the Bill has secured widespread support. However, an amendment which would have brought within the Bill's provisions any 'Restricted 18' videos (i.e. sex films, not necessarily with violence), got considerable support. Both the Prime Minister and the Home Secretary favoured the amendment, eventually rejected, and 'reforms' in the obscene publications law have already been promised. What started as an attempt to improve appearances in some inner city areas shows every sign of shifting into moralist overdrive.

This should be enough to make the most convinced feminist opponent of pornography just a little uneasy. It is difficult to believe that in all this the State has had the interests of women at heart, or that the law — which does little, after all, for victims of rape or domestic violence — can be an effective ally, certainly at the present time, for feminists opposed to pornography.

But it is doubtful in any event whether legal controls could ever meet feminist objections to pornography. Feminism by politicising areas of life hitherto regarded as private or personal effectively undercuts the very distinction between public and private on which any policy of state intervention rests. Feminists argue that the use of pornography (mainly by men) in 'private' has social repercussions because it affects all women. But once the public/private distinction breaks down, the law becomes either all-pervasive in its admissible scope — or irrelevant to the problem. Even as it stands today legislation concerning the portrayal of sexual and sexually violent behaviour arguably constitutes a general threat to civil liberties, then perhaps then the legislative road is better avoided by feminists.

While pornography's critics have always professed a concern for civil liberties some of them have argued that pornography is, in a written or visual form, in a class of its own. Yet images of women in some advertisements, in fashion magazines or in pinup photos, for example, all recirculate ideas about women, femininity and female sexuality which are basically no different from those offered in pornography, and all offer similar gratifications to the spectator. Why single out pornography for censure?

Although feminists may be critical of the notion that pornography is 'different', they do argue that it is harmful. But harm of a similar order may be evident, too, in other representations — the 'social harm' of the limited and repressive portrayals of women,

femininity and female sexuality. In no circumstances — even where the State could be regarded as an ally of feminism — would it be desirable to deal with this type of harm by legislation.

Short of resort to law, though, feminist critics have a range of options at their disposal: from direct action and lobbying to broadly based campaigns of consciousness-raising and education. Pornographic materials proliferate because in one way or another they make money. Legal restriction does nothing to alleviate this harm: on the contrary, so long as demand exists, illicit underground trade in porn makes it all the more attractive — and profitable. The State cannot reach those areas which create the demand for pornography in the first place. □

Annette Kuhn is the author of *Women's Pictures: Feminism and Cinema*, published in 1982 by Routledge and Kegan Paul.

PLUTONIUM

Extra security

Duncan Campbell describes how civil and military nuclear policy erodes liberty

GOVERNMENT DECISIONS about nuclear matters have invariably been taken in circumstances of great secrecy. Military affairs are naturally often secret and decision-taking unaccountable to the public. But information about nuclear weapons, like secret intelligence, invariably enjoys special levels of security protection.

Nuclear secrecy has to a degree spurred

the arms race, since there can be no public debate or policy discussion about the appropriate level of armaments, when no information at all is available to fuel the debate.

Atomic power research and development went hand in hand with atomic weaponry. The UK Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA), an independent body responsible for both weapons manufacture and the nuclear power programme, was set up in 1954. Although Britain's first commercial power reactors (starting with Calder Hall in 1956) were celebrated as heralding a new age of nuclear power, their purpose was primarily military — producing plutonium for new nuclear weapons.

At first, everyone working in atomic energy for UKAEA was a crown servant, and automatically bound by the Official Secrets Acts. Over 30 years, this authority has been divested of most of its assets, some of which have gone to autonomous organisations like British Nuclear Fuels Limited (BNFL). But employees of these organisations still remain bound by government security regulations and the constraints of the Official Secrets Act.

The penalties for foreign espionage in the Official Secrets Acts automatically apply to anyone, government servant or not, who seeks to help an enemy. But by bringing all non-government nuclear industry employees within the scope of the Acts, employees can be punished by up to two years imprisonment for unauthorised disclosures which do not threaten national security. There are effective restraints on the publication of the results of scientific research — and a prohibition on any comment *at all* on nuclear matters.

Employees of BNFL, for example, are forbidden to travel to Soviet bloc countries, China, and others such as Yugoslavia or Yemen, without special permission. Many BNFL staff are also positively vetted, a procedure generally only applying to those in the civil service with regular access to Top Secret material. Positive vetting consists of a lengthy background check on an individual, and one or more security interviews. In the late 1970s and 1980s, candidates and their referees began again to be asked whether they were or had ever been members of, or associated with members of, CND. This question reappeared in the security investigators' checklists alongside homosexuality (for men) and Welsh and Scots nationalism (for Celts).

In 1976, the Atomic Energy Authority Constabulary, the special police force which guards UKAEA and BNFL nuclear installations, was given the right to carry arms and to engage in hot pursuit of anyone believed to have taken 'nuclear material' — and to arrest them and bring them back to be detained at a nuclear installation.

Given the extreme dangers to public safety of certain types of nuclear material, it is unreasonable to object (having first protested the prior existence of the material) to the principle of special powers and force being lawful in the recovery of such material. What is objectionable is that these powers are exercised not by an orthodox police force — whose accountability to par-

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liament and public, if inadequate, is at least clearly understood – but by a *private* police force. Accountability for the actions of the UKAEA Constabulary is remote; it reports to the UKAEA, which in turn comes under the Secretary of State for Energy.

IN 1975, the US government's Nuclear Regulatory Commission examined the dangers to the constitutional rights of Americans posed by an intensified nuclear programme, involving fast breeder reactors and increasing amounts of plutonium in circulation. An NRC consultant, John H. Barton, warned that:

The possibility of surveillance is probably the most severe civil liberties effect of a plutonium recycle decision. The surveillance would act at all times; it would not be restricted to emergency situations. It could have significant chilling effects on First Amendment discussion, particularly in the nuclear area.

But a year later, the NRC set up its own 'Intelligence Assessment Team', which traded information on protestors' activities between nuclear power companies and intelligence agencies such as the FBI and CIA.

Identical considerations were raised at the same time in Britain by a report on nuclear power from the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution. Sir Brian (now Lord) Flowers's panel outlined new difficulties and dangers for civil liberties which would result from increasing reliance on nuclear power – and fast breeder reactors in particular. The 'plutonium economy' thereby created raised the possibility of:

Secret surveillance of members of the public and possibly of employees who may make 'undesirable' contacts. The activities might include the use of informers, infiltrators, wire-tapping, checking on bank accounts and the opening of mail.

These 'would be practised on suspected members of extremists or terrorist groups or agents . . . we regard such activities as highly likely and indeed inevitable'. Flowers added, correctly, that he supposed that 'no doubt' these methods were already in use against 'certain small groups that are regarded as dangerous'. So their use in relation to the plutonium threat would be 'nothing new in principle'.

What is most to be feared is an insidious growth in surveillance in response to a growing threat as the amount of plutonium in existence, and familiarity with its properties grows.

These 'unquantifiable' effects on the shape of future society should, said the Royal Commission, be a 'major consideration' in the future of the reactor programme. But there is little evidence that the government or its nuclear and security agencies have paid heed to these remarks.

THE MOST SEVERE danger of civil nuclear power is if a nuclear weapon were to be fabricated from diverted or stolen fissile material. A terrorist threat to disperse nuclear waste by conventional means would be only slightly less terrifying. And such threats are real; between 1975 and 1983 the US Department of Energy's Nuclear Emer-

gency Search Team decided that 20 threats were sufficiently credible to require emergency action. One threat was found to be real; a former nuclear employee had obtained spent reactor fuel rods, which he had threatened to disperse.

The threat of nuclear terrorism is so great that western governments have spoken openly about a possible need to resort to torture to get information. In the UK, the Royal Commission anticipated, there might have to be:

Restrictions on the rights of movement and assembly, and the suspension of *habeas corpus* if the threat of plutonium being exploded was serious . . .

If a threat were thought to be credible, the amount of civilian disturbance involved in a major – perhaps nationwide – search, would be considerable. Evacuation would also be required in the event of an accident to a civil power reactor.

The nuclear industry has increasingly sought to 'criminalise' its opponents. A 1978 report by the US Rand Corporation – examining the alleged 'Attributes of potential criminal adversaries of US nuclear programs' – stressed that physical security measures ultimately had their limitations, and that a more extensive nuclear programme would require considerably more 'pre-emptive' intelligence about adversaries, and greater secrecy about plans and procedures.

Right-wing lobbyists in Britain have been ready to brand anti-nuclear protest as serving the interests of the Soviet Union, and see centralised nuclear power as a useful new counter to the traditional bargaining power of trades unions.

THE BOMB ultimately threatens not just individual liberty, but all liberty and all existence. No government is keen for its citizens to contemplate the likely effects of nuclear war, so a vocabulary has been formed for discussion and debate in which all offence is defence, terrorism and genocide are deterrence, and the destruction of a civil population is 'collateral damage'. Nowhere is this attack more evident than in the civilian preparation for nuclear war.

The first, key task in British Home Defence plans (which include civil defence), defined in the Home Office's 1975 circular to local authorities on *Home Defence Planning Assumptions*, is 'to secure the United Kingdom against any internal threat'. Such documents as the Home Office's *Training Manual for Scientific Advisers* speak of the threats to the security of the United Kingdom arising from 'dissident groups . . . [whose] aim would be to weaken the national will and ability to fight'. It identifies the threat as arising from trades unionists and pacifists in particular and explains the need for strong measures against them.

Certain dissident extremist groups are . . . known to be in sympathy with our potential enemies and . . . can be expected to react against the national good. The groups are

small [but] their significance should not be underestimated.

This extract from official planning documents can leave little doubt that in the early stages of an east-west crisis that might lead to nuclear war, protest would be regarded by the British government as akin to treachery. The right to strike, the right to free speech, or the right to say 'no' to war might only be exercised at the gravest risk to life and liberty.

The government knows this, and is – like its NATO partners – prepared to counter civil dissent with military force. NATO's regular top-level war games in the 'Win-tex'/'Cimex' (Winter Exercise/Civil-military exercise) series, held every two years, usually include rehearsals for the suppression of civil unrest, strikes and other disruption to military plans.

In the late stages of a pre-war crisis, Britain would be under martial law in all but name. Internment plans have been made to take at least 20,000 political adversaries of the government off the streets. Freedom of movement would be denied, as most major roads would be sealed off as 'Essential Service Routes'. The telephone system would be shut down for non-essential users, and food and fuel supplies put under government control. Under emergency powers, parliament would be suspended, and Regional and Sub-Regional Commissioners appointed as shadow direct rulers of 12 individual regions (including Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland) after attack.

After a nuclear strike, it goes without saying that there will be neither civilisation nor civil liberty. Democracy and the rule of law will be over for the duration, supplanted for those who do survive by the law of the jungle. There will be death camps for diseased and useless refugees, and ruthless rationing of almost non-existent medical care. Decisions about food supplies and other difficult matters would, say Home Office circulars, be 'harsh and inequitable'. Justice would be an expedient and summary matter with brutal and often capital penalties dispensed without right of appeal or established rules of procedure.

After this, what? According to senior Home Office officials, the government's Regional Commissioners would take over and look forward to 'national regeneration', aiming at creating 'a stable democratic society inevitably reduced substantially in economic and social terms'. Vital aspects of this process would include:

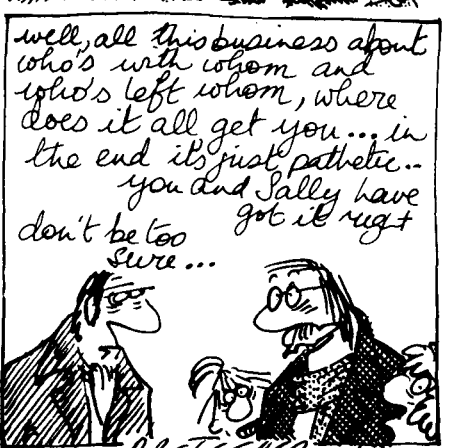
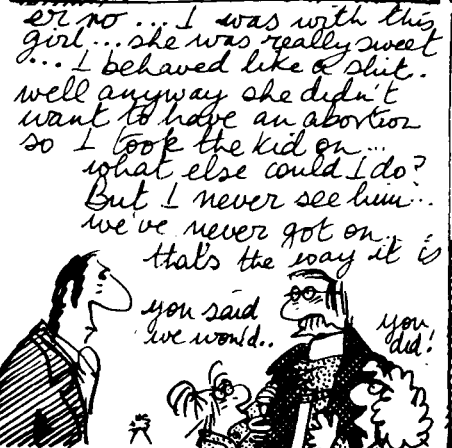
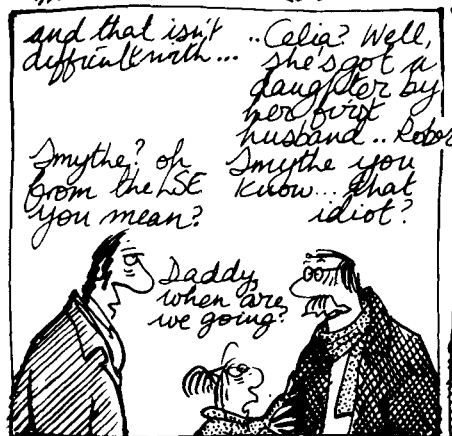
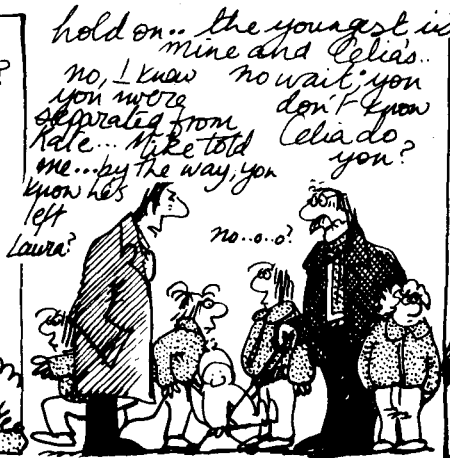
The formation of a national government and the restoration of democratic procedures and freedoms . . .

But in a wrecked world where the existence of human life itself might lie in the balance for decades, no time limit is proposed for the slow crawl back to pre-holocaust democracy. The very idea, of course, is fatuous. The point is that there must be no war. Our energies and liberties should be devoted to that cause above all others. □

This article is extracted from *Civil Liberties 1984* published this week by Martin Robertson (£6.95) to mark the 50th anniversary of the NCCL.

BRETECHER

HAPPY FAMILIES



BRETECHER

DIARY

David Edgar

Professor Eric Hobsbawm returns to the fray this week (in *Marxism Today*). In his original broadside, 'Labour's Lost Millions', Prof. Hobsbawm suggested, *en passant*, that an Anti-Thatcher electoral pact was the second worst option for the country at the next general election (for which heresy he has been severely berated). He also mapped the full enormity of the 1983 defeat, arguing that a major cause of the debacle was that Labour was no longer seen as the party of a whole class, but only of certain special interests within it. There is, however, a merily expanding myth – fuelled by press reaction to the GLC's grant-aiding policy – that the phrase 'special interests' subsumes movements – like the women's movement – which aspire to represent the majority, and campaigns – like that against cruise and Trident – which obstinately retain greater support than was achieved by Labour at the election. One of the post-June polls (Gallup's) indicated that, for the first time, fewer women had voted Conservative than men. The 'gender gap' in the United States is less statistically dubious, and there was unanimity among the pollsters, in June 1982, that the Falklands Factor bit the male voter much harder than the female. There are glimmers, therefore, that women's anti-militarism could prove electorally significant, and thus that there is, as Prof. Hobsbawm implied in 'Labour's Lost Millions', no contradiction between taking a more realistic attitude to the obvious desire of many people to detach themselves from public as well as private landlords, and a full-blooded commitment both to a non-nuclear defence strategy and to a fundamental and irreversible improvement in the position and status of women in society.

And it is February again, and in Labour Party branches up and down the land, keenly-fought contests are taking place. I have always in the past spurned the comforts and privileges of elective office, on the totally spurious grounds that this allows me to preface letters to the newspapers with the phrase 'as a grass-roots Labour Party member'. This year, however, I was prevailed upon by a small but impeccably sinister faction (all supporters of *New Society*) to put myself forward for the post of Political Education Officer. Having won the position (after a fierce but friendly fight), I am struck by how little the Labour Party's forms of discourse have been challenged by feminist critiques of the traditional political meeting. Still, a single speaker addresses neat, parallel rows from the safety of a table; still (and as a consequence), the subsequent discussion consists largely of predictable sectarian point-scoring (I was deeply disturbed by the fact that in his comments on

rating reform, the speaker saw fit to omit all reference to the Tebbit Bill/H-Blocks/Reagan's Central America policy.) In short, a more suitable title would be Political Re-Education Officer; the structure of debate seems specifically designed to gag the immense knowledge and experience which exists within most Labour Party branches. We aim, in our small way, to change that.

Another thing I'd like the Labour Party to change is the relative emphasis the leadership appears to be placing on the two sets of elections that come up in the early summer. The party nationally appears to be concerned to emphasise the Euro-dimension, but I must assure it that the party locally is of the possibly jaundiced view that, while we are unlikely to sweep to power in Strasbourg, we have a good chance, for example, of securing a Labour majority in Birmingham. (There is an even more jaundiced view that the euro-orientation of the national party has something to do with the fact that there are no local elections in London.) The PLP may well be stuck in opposition for the next four years; the party is in power elsewhere, and, while that is so, rate capping and housing benefit may appear to be more central to voters' lives than the highest butter-mountain or the deepest wine lake.

It appears to have excited little comment that Francis Noel-Baker, former Labour MP, then Social Democrat, has announced a second defection, this time to the Conservative Party. In a letter to Dr Death, Noel-Baker explains that, on both foreign and domestic policy, 'I find the Tories more credible than you'. There, he may have a point (depending on how you define 'credible'), but what interests me is the notion that Mr Noel-Baker's dislodgement may prove the first stone of an avalanche. There are, after all, two sorts of left-right defector, the single leapers and the triple jumpers, and it may be, who knows, that the SDP will prove not so much a final resting place, but more a staging post for weary travellers en route from the right of the Labour Party towards the just plain Right.

THIS ENGLAND

£3 book tokens for entries printed. (On postcards, please.)

☐ Torvill and Dean were cheered by MPs in the House of Commons last night. Winding up a debate on housing benefits, the Social Security Minister of State, Dr Rhodes Boyson, said to cheers: 'I do think even housing benefits are put into perspective on occasions like this'. – *Guardian* (D. Herman).

☐ Dead, not red. Labour Party Headquarters of Highworth, Wilts are to be turned into a funeral parlour. – *Daily Mirror* (Chris Marlow).



Another example of the staging-post syndrome is provided by Julian Lewis, formerly scourge of the Labour Left in Newham North-East, supporter of the SDP fore-runner, the Social Democratic Alliance, and unsuccessful Tory candidate last year. Mr Lewis is presently engaged in running the virulently anti-CND Coalition for Peace through Security, and this intelligence (and much else besides) is to be found in the latest edition of *Labour Research*, which devotes its February issue to a round-up of the burgeoning right pressure groups. Sadly, perhaps, it doesn't cover either the new authoritarian Conservatives grouped round Roger Scruton's *Salisbury Review*; nor the commentators and columnists associated with the *Spectator*, who appear to be moving rapidly into the same, mystic-nationalist birch woods. In anticipatory response to the Soviet politburo's reassertion of gerontocracy, the powers that be at 'the most agreeable publication in the world' recently selected as their new editor one Charles Moore, who appears not yet to have the vote. Mr Moore's meteoric career was detailed in both the posh Sundays: neither of them mentioned, however, his authorship of 'The Old People of Lambeth', a pamphlet published by the Salisbury Group in the days before it boasted a Review. It consisted of a series of anonymous interviews with white Brixton residents, from which Moore concluded that while 'the decay of morals, of religion and of discipline' were major worries, 'immigration was regarded by almost all as the great cataclysm of their lives'. Further, he deduced, 'in the course of conversation', that his interviewees felt 'that white English life has a richness and civilisation which West Indian life lacked, and, indeed, that without having any dogmatic or arrogant theory of racial superiority, they can 'see with their own eyes' that West Indians are 'people more primitive than they'. It may be recalled that the first issue of the *Salisbury Review* itself contained an article by Cambridge don, John Casey, calling for compulsory repatriation of black immigrants to Britain, on the grounds of cultural incompatibility with the 'host' population.

Roger Woddis is on holiday.

LETTERS

Frayed at the edges

Eric Chalker, Chairman, Political Affairs Committee, Electoral Reform Society, London SE1

Peter Kellner must be very worried by the arguments for electoral reform, because he does keep returning to the fray.

In the first of his two latest articles on the subject (NS 10 February), he endeavoured to demonstrate that putting together elected representatives from different parties in order to form a government representative of a majority of the voters would actually not result in majority government at all.

In the second article (NS 17 February), he has effectively contradicted this argument by his endorsement of the alternative vote (STV in single member constituencies) as a means of legitimising the position of individual MPs.

If a coalition of votes is acceptable to support an MP, Mr Kellner, why not to support a government?

Peter Kellner's reasoning in the earlier article left much to be desired. On that occasion, he introduced us to nine people unable to agree on a common choice of meal. What he failed to do was to show why it is better that a minority of the people should force the majority to eat what they don't want, rather than reach agreement on something sensible that they can all tolerate even if not wholeheartedly enjoy.

Furthermore, if the executives to whom Mr Kellner refers are to be 'continuously accountable to Parliament', surely that means that it is our representatives in Parliament themselves, and not the executives, who are the real rulers? The fact that Parliament by and large chooses to tolerate the executive is its choice, not a constitutional compulsion. If its tolerance is too easily given, then its position needs to be strengthened against the power and the patronage of the executive – and the only way that can be done is by electoral reform, which will make our representatives more accountable to us.

There is no reason why a proportionately-elected Parliament could not support a single-party government if it chose. But a coalition government would be a government for which a majority had voted in the very real, practical and constitutional sense that it would be a government chosen by our elected representatives. For what other purpose are they there?

Fighting a 'macho' army

Peter Tatchell, London SE1

Denis MacShane (Letters, 10 February) is grossly unfair to accuse me of wanting to 'reintroduce conscription'. I have never advocated such a measure. Certainly, I do support the general principle of non-provocative territorial defence as an alternative to nuclear weapons and I have pointed out that Switzerland, Yugoslavia and Sweden provide practical examples of its successful application. This does not, however, imply that Britain ought slavishly and uncritically to reproduce these particular models of territorial defence.

So far as conscription is concerned, it is undesirable and unnecessary for two main reasons. First, it seems inherently totalitarian and contradictory for the State to force its citizens to defend democracy. Surely, if the defence of

freedom is to carry any real conviction, it must be an act of free will by free men and women?

Second, the size of armed forces required for a territorial defence strategy could be met without conscription. Comparing Britain to Sweden: we are about half the land mass with twice the population and our voluntarily-enlisted regular army is five times larger. To match the Swedish density of armed soldiers per square mile, at most Britain would need an additional 100,000 recruits for a reorganised municipal-based territorial army.

To encourage such recruits and ensure that they are representative of a broad cross-section of society and not just the 'macho militarists' that Denis MacShane fears, the left ought to be campaigning for recruitment to be open to men and women on a completely equal basis and for a long overdue democratisation of the armed forces along the lines of reforms which have already been won by Swedish, Norwegian and Dutch service personnel.

Peace arrests

Janey Hulme, 15 Ramsbury Road, St Albans

I am currently engaged in some research for the peace movement and would like to ask readers who do not belong to CND nationally or locally or any similar affiliated groups to contact me by letter or telephone if they have ever been arrested for protest against nuclear weapons since 1981. My telephone number is St Albans 55652.

Star in the east?

Robin Gutteridge, Grimsby

Tony Chater's letter (NS 17 February) is the best criticism yet of the *Morning Star* and his editorship. He edits out John Cox's critical references to the Soviet Union because he believes many of his readers will object to them. He is probably correct.

No one can be in any doubt as to the Left's opposition to American foreign policy, but too often the other side of this is a silence or ambivalence towards Soviet actions. Most of us fail to show even-handedness because the task at home is so immense and so visible. But the few who are uncritically allied with Russia have an especially negative influence and until Soviet policy is subject to the same critical scrutiny as American policy, millions of people will withhold their support from the peace movement. Even worse, it may edge them into the war camp.

To those who stick by their Russian stance and say I've got it all wrong, I'd just say: maybe, but don't censor letters in a one-sided manner.

Bloody Duncan Campbell

Jane Kelly, London SE17

I think it was wrong to trick people with the picture of a bloody Duncan Campbell on the front cover beside a headline for a Special Branch story (NS 17 February). There are enough horror stories in the world without the need to create any. You have heard of the boy who cried wolf, I suppose? ▶

The Causes of Unemployment

Edited by C. A. Greenhalgh, P. R. G. Layard and A. J. Oswald

Since 1973 unemployment has risen sharply, with larger rises in Europe than in the USA. In many European countries there has been no year since 1973 when unemployment has fallen to any significant degree. This has led many economists to focus on explaining the medium-term level of unemployment and to search for convincing explanations of short-term fluctuations. This important and timely book throws considerable light on the causes of unemployment. Contributors include such notable economists as O. Ashenfelter, P. Minford, S. Nickell, J. Sachs, and L. H. Summers. £8.95

Poverty and Incentives

The Economics of Social Security

Richard Hemming

This book aims to assess the performance of the British social security system. The social security benefits currently available are discussed, and answers are given to such questions as: What is the poverty trap? The book discusses possible reforms of the social security system and raises such fundamental issues as: What is the future of national insurance? £15 Paperback £5.95

Oxford University Press

Suburban pleasure

Raphael Samuel, Ruskin College, Oxford

Jericho, Oxford, where the History Workshop Centre is housed, was built (so it is said) as a suburb for printers at the Oxford University Press. It was, of course, the Oxford home of Jude the Obscure, when he worked as a stonemason in this city; and Ruskin (according to Hardy's later preface) was the college he would have gone to.

So there is nothing sentimental about calling our terraced house an 'artisan's cottage': it has some fine wooden panelling and (like the house in Gus Elen's song), a very pretty little garden. No doubt to North Oxford grandees we're just another slum. But the property developers, who seem as active about these parts as anywhere, know better.

Joint appeal to the West

Representatives of Czechoslovak Charter 77 and Polish KOR and Solidarity have issued a joint statement warning that as long as their civil rights activities continue to be suppressed there will be no genuine peace in Europe. They also appeal to people in the West to help them free political prisoners in Czechoslovakia and Poland. The statement, dated 12 February in Prague and Warsaw, was signed by 25 Poles and 22 Czechs and Slovaks including Zbigniew Bujak and Bogdan Lis of the underground Solidarity coordinating committee TKK and playwright Václav Havel and former Foreign Minister Prof. Jiří Hájek of Charter 77. The information was telephoned from Prague to London-based agency Palach Press giving the full text of the statement as follows:

In the spirit of the joint meeting of Charter 77 signatories and members of KOR/KSS/ on the Czechoslovak-Polish border in 1978 we wish to express jointly today our determination to struggle for the observation of human rights and civil freedoms. As Charter 77 signatories, members of former KOR/KSS/ and activists of Solidarity we want to continue the fight for democracy, sovereignty and freedom of our countries. At the same time we protest against the imprisonment and harassment of our friends and colleagues, Charter 77 signatories, members of former KOR/KSS/ and Solidarity activists and we appeal to all people in the world who hold dear the freedom and dignity of man to join our efforts to free political prisoners in Poland and Czechoslovakia which is not in the interests of our countries alone. Charter 77 as well as KOR/KSS/ and Solidarity have always fought for the greater respect of man, his natural interests and inalienable rights by peaceful means. While their activities continue to be suppressed there there will be no genuine peace in Europe and the world.

Prague and Warsaw, 12 February 1984

From Poland: Konrad Bielinski, Zbigniew Bujak, Andrzej Celinski, Jerzy Ficowski, Zbigniew Janas, Tadeusz Jędynak, Zdzisław Kaminski, Wiesław Piotr Keciak, Jan Kielanowski, Anna Kowalska, Edward Liżyński, Jan Józef Lipski, Bogdan Lis, Jan Litvinski, Halina Mikolajska, Ewa Milewicz, Wojciech Onyskiewicz, Antoni Pajdak, Wiktor Kulerski, Józef Rybicki, Amela Steinsbergova, Eugeniusz Szumiejko, Maria Wosiek, Jan Zieja.

From Czechoslovakia: Václav Benda, Jiří Dienstbier, Jiří Hájek, Václav Havel, Ladislav Hejdránek, Marie Hromádková, Božena Homárková, Jan Kozlík, Marie Růt Krizková, Miroslav Kusý, Václav Malý, Anna Marvanová, Jaroslav Mezník, Radim Palous, Bedřich Placák, Jan Ruml, Jiří Ruml, Anna Sabatová, Jaroslav Sabata, Jan Simsa, Petruska Sustrová, Josef Zverina.

FEEDBACK

Thatcher's shrinking voters

IN HER ARTICLE 'Shifting Sands' (NS, 10 February) Sarah Benton unfortunately did not present the views of those who disagree with the *Marxism Today*/Labour Co-ordinating Committee political axis. It is worth outlining some of the issues at stake.

Marxism Today has projected an analysis of Thatcher's Conservative Party as building around itself a new mass popular base. In reality the support of Thatcher's Conservatives is part of a decline of the Conservative base which has been going on for 50 years by any serious study and for 30 years by even the most crude electoral criteria. As this trend may seem surprising we will outline the facts.

The graph below shows the Tory percentage of the vote in every general election since 1931 — that year being the historic peak of Conservative support. Even if one discounted the inter-war results as 'exceptional' the trend since the post-war peak of 1955 is obvious. Taking successive Tory victories, the Conservative vote was 50 per cent in 1955, 49 per cent in 1959, 46 per cent in 1970, 44 per cent in 1979, and 42 per cent in 1983. Each successive defeat saw the Tory vote fall to a lower level than the one previously.

Such figures are those of a party in long-term decline — not a party consolidating a new mass base behind it. This decline of Tory support is easily traced in social terms. It is the breaking away of three blocs of traditional support:

- (i) Decline of Conservative support among women. Gallup studies show that in 1945-59, an average of 7 per cent more women than men voted Tory. This fell to 6 per cent in 1964-70, 3 per cent in 1974, and 0 per cent in 1979-83. MORI studies give different absolute figures but identical trends.
- (ii) Elimination of Tory electoral strongholds outside the South of England. Lancashire, Protestant Ulster, and Scotland were all areas where the Conservatives had support above the British average. By 1983 this support had disappeared.
- (iii) Decline of Tory support in the big cities. Between 1955 and 1983 the Conservative vote dropped by seven per cent in Britain but by 29 per cent in Glasgow, 24 per cent in Liverpool, 20 per cent in Manchester, 14 per cent in Sheffield etc.

These three processes of decline — which interact with and reinforce each other — explain the erosion of Tory support over the last 30 years. Purely as a matter of fact we are seeing not the creation of a new powerful Tory bloc but the historical disintegration of major elements of old Conservative mass support.

Does this Conservative decline lead to easy optimism for Labour? Quite the reverse. Precisely because the decline of Tory support is so consistent the attacks on the Labour movement are going to intensify, not diminish.

Labour control of major councils, relatively unfettered trade unions, mass Labour electoral support were acceptable under conditions of a stable and extremely popular

Tory party. They are dangerous under conditions of Conservative decline. Hence the long-term assault on the unions, on the finances of the Labour Party, on Labour-controlled councils.

In addition the Alliance, unlike the Conservative Party, is an extremely effective instrument for cutting into Labour's vote.

Tory decline also poses an evident question in British politics. The basic economic and political changes put through by Thatcher are supported by the most powerful sectors of British capital. Britain, however, is not becoming a one-party state. How, therefore, are the basic structural changes wrought by Thatcherism to be safeguarded under conditions of Conservative decline and inevitable future changes of government?

The answer is evident. Capitalist hegemony is not the same thing as mere possession of governmental office. Hegemony is exercised not merely by determining who is the government but also by who is the opposition. To term David Owen's SDP 'Thatcherism with a human face' is not a pleasantry but a perfectly accurate description of its politics.

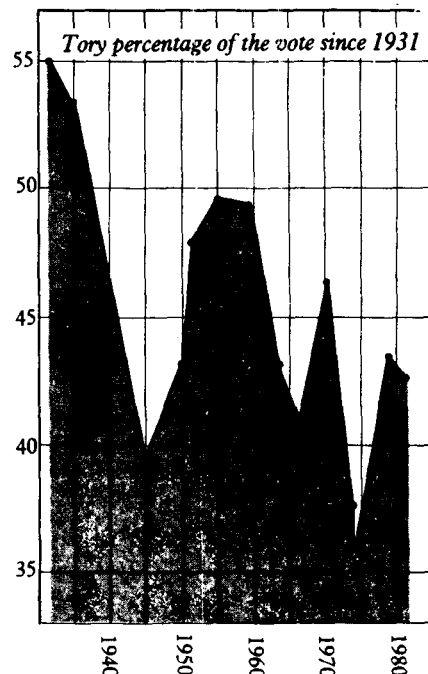
These are the components that are emerging. A weakened but still dominant Tory party; Labour able to come to office only by permission of, and limited by, the Alliance; Labour therefore unable to undo any of the fundamental works of Thatcher; 'Thatcherism with or without Thatcher', safeguarded by David Steel and David Owen. That, not Eric Hobsbawm's imaginary invocation of fascism, is the real reorganisation of British politics which is now taking place.

The debate is about the nature of the dangers that face the British Labour movement, not whether they exist.

John Ross

John Ross is author of *Thatcher and Friends: The Anatomy of the Tory Party*, published by Pluto Press in 1983.

Thatcher's fake landslide



RIGHTS & LIBERTIES

INSIDE:

- Whose rights are restricted
- How they find out about you
- How to make an official secret into free information

NCCL CHARTER OF CIVIL RIGHTS & LIBERTIES

- 1
to live in freedom and safe from personal harm.
- 2
to protection from ill-treatment or punishment that is inhuman or degrading.
- 3
to equality before the law and to freedom from discrimination on such grounds as disability, political or other opinion, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation.
- 4
to protection from arbitrary arrest and unnecessary detention, the right to a fair, speedy and public trial, to be presumed innocent until proved guilty, and to legal advice and representation.
- 5
to a fair hearing before any authority exercising power over the individual.
- 6
to freedom of thought, conscience and belief.
- 7
to freedom of speech and publication.
- 8
to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.
- 9
to move freely within one's country of residence and to leave and enter it without hindrance.
- 10
to privacy and the right of access to official information.



Montage: Peter Kennard

“Excessive secrecy undermines our democracy — the sources of power and influence are obscured, public servants are not properly accountable, public participation is seriously hampered, justice is not seen to be done, and inefficiency and error are made more likely. Freedom of information legislation is essential.”

Des Wilson, chairman, 1984 Committee for Freedom of Information (campaign)

Taking a liberty

Larry Gostin

PROTECTING 'public order' and 'national security' has lost its true meaning as referring to particular and serious acts of violence directed against persons, property or the State. The concept of 'a threat to public order or security' now seems to encompass any activity defined as such a threat by the Executive or the police. Sometimes it includes the mere expression of political and social philosophies which differ from prevailing government policies. This widening of the definition of subversive activity can be seen, for example, in the case of Madeleine Haig who, having written to her local newspaper about a CND rally, was questioned by the Special Branch; or where the Home Secretary recently refused to grant a visa to five Eastern European trade unionists wishing to attend a Scottish Peace Conference because they would 'propagandise' their views which would be 'non-conducive to the public good'.

Freedom of expression and assembly should not provide a licence for real incitement to imminent and serious violence. But peoples' liberties are now being infringed on much broader and more ambiguous grounds. 'Public order' and 'national security' have become signals for deprivation of liberty where the Executive chooses not to further explain the reasons for the deprivation.

Judging by the current Parliamentary agenda, we are drifting towards a more authoritarian society. (i) *The Police and Criminal Evidence Bill* extends the power to stop and search and allows detention in police custody for 96 hours without charge, including the right to hold suspects incommunicado for 36 hours. The length of detention without charge in Britain will become the longest in any common law country. (ii) *The Prevention of Terrorism Bill*, in theory an emergency measure, is effectively after nine years part of the constitutional position in Britain. (iii) *The Data Protection Bill*, in spite of its intention to safeguard privacy, excludes entire information systems from the need to register, including all national security files. It allows the wholesale transfer of confidential information, for example from medical and social work files to the police, even when no crime has been committed. (iv) *The Telecommunications Bill* contains provisions which allow the police to tap telephones with the Home Secretary's warrant. The European Commission of Human Rights has already found the law on telephone tapping is an unjustifiable interference with the individual's right to a private life (*Malone v. the United Kingdom*).

There has also recently been a worrying resurgence in the use of the already thoroughly discredited Official Secrets Act. This is illustrated by the prosecution of Sarah

Children



Montage: Peter Kennard

CHILDREN are routinely oppressed by more powerful adults, whose property they are often seen as being.

Children on the run — nearly 4,000 in London alone each year — are especially at risk. They are vulnerable to exploitative adults, but have no right to choose who they live with. They can be arrested on sight. Even those putting them up risk jail or a fine for harbouring them.

Children ritually beaten by their parents have little hope of redress. The 1933 Children and Young People Act states that nothing in the law should be 'construed as affecting the right of any parent or teacher . . . to administer punishment (to a child)'.

Then there are the children locked up for persistent truancy and delinquency following the failures of the compulsory education system or their own families. And possibly the worst-off are the 1,600 mentally handicapped children living in bleak long-stay hospital wards who receive, according to a report, just five minutes 'mothering' each day.

Almost a quarter of children will experience separation from their parents before the age of 16. Yet, they not only have no choice over which parent they live with, they cannot make direct representations to the court about their feelings. They have to depend on the parent of their choice speaking up for them.

When they get into trouble, children are supposed to have a parent or guardian present during interviews by the police. But a Policy Studies Institute report found that while the police were relatively efficient at contacting a responsible adult, the children were often interviewed before the adult could come or without them being in the same room.

The Children's Legal Centre receives a steady flow of complaints from children illustrating their lack of rights. 'My foster mother opens my letters'; 'The tea is sugared and milked in the pot'; 'I've been forbidden to see my friend'; and 'Do I have to leave school?' Although some may seem trivial, they are not to the young people themselves.

Since the last century, successive governments have set about protecting children — from exploitation, illiteracy, abuse, poverty, emotional neglect, etc. But less concern has been paid to the rights of children as autonomous individuals who may want to take responsibility for their own lives.

But recently, government departments have begun to talk in these terms. For example, a 1983 DHSS Circular on client access to social

work files says 'requests from children or young people (to see their files) should be treated in the same way as requests from adults'. And, to date, the *Gillick* case ruling holds that children of any age are entitled to consent to, or refuse, medical treatment as long as they understand its implications.

The European Convention on Human Rights has no lower age limit and this has meant that the European Court ruling that parents' wishes on corporal punishment must be respected by State schools in Britain. Children's rights have suddenly become an (almost) respectable lobby.

Immigrants

IMMIGRATION LAW and practice systematically abuses the rights and liberties of people to a degree which would be unacceptable to public opinion if those affected were white.

Detention and removal: An immigration officer at a port can detain a passenger for up to 7 days before he or she can even apply for bail. Over 3,000 people, including more than 100 children, were thus detained in 1982.

An alleged illegal entrant can be detained without charge or trial for any length of time, often months, with no opportunity to apply for bail. Irrespective of length of residence, an illegal entrant can be removed from the country without prior appeal.

People may be deported on the very broadly interpreted grounds that their presence is not 'conducive to the public good'.

Search and arrest: A police or immigration officer may, without a warrant, search premises or arrest anyone he has reasonable cause to suspect is an illegal entrant or overstayer.

The right to a fair hearing: In most appeals against immigration officials' decisions the appellant is absent overseas. Immigration officers cannot be cross-examined in appeals. In 1982 appellants succeeded in only 12 per cent of cases, yet it is the only sort of tribunal from which there is no appeal on a point of law to a court. In some cases there is no right of appeal at all.

Freedom from discrimination: Britain is the only country in the world which denies a group of its citizens, mainly Asians from East Africa, the right to enter the country of their *only* nationality. The European Commission of Human Rights described this as 'racially motivated' and amounting to 'inhuman and degrading treatment'. In 1982 a passenger from the new Commonwealth was 33 times more likely to be refused entry than one from Australia, Canada or New Zealand.

The Human Rights Commission has also condemned the sex discrimination in the rules which deny women the right to live here with a foreign husband.

Respect for private and family life: Families are divided by immigration laws. If they want to live here they have to submit to gross interference with their privacy. Private correspondence is read (one couple were recently denied the right to live together because their letters were 'not sufficiently affectionate'). Medical examinations can be required (with no restriction on their purpose so that vaginal examinations formerly carried out purportedly to determine virginity were not precluded by law).

Knowing your rights: The instructions which guide immigration officers are secret. People who enter the UK from Ireland and who never see an immigration officer may be deemed to have only a limited time to stay in the UK, or to be illegal entrants. No one tells them which.

In prison

'... offers an effectual method of exciting the imagination to a most desirable point of abhorrence' (1826 encyclopaedia article on prison architecture)

'... (an) affront to a civilised society' (Report of the work of the prison department in England and Wales 1980)

SINCE 1826 prison standards have been raised – but in relation to the contemporary standards in the rest of society they are an 'affront to a civilised society'. Today these conditions are hypocritically 'regretted' whereas in 1826 they were boasted about.

Prisoners in British prisons have no rights, only privileges. Exercise, human companionship, minimal standards of accommodation, sanitation, light and ventilation are all deemed to be privileges to be granted or taken away. Thus Paul Norney has spent over nine months in a 10ft by 5ft cell in Durham with no association with any other prisoner.

The Home Office lays down no minimum standards of accommodation for prisoners. In local prisons three men will often share an 11ft by 12ft cell with three beds and three chamber pots. Such overcrowding – which would be illegal outside – is exacerbated when the only place to eat is in their cells. Thus a prisoner eats off his lap, sitting on his bed, one foot against his overflowing chamber pot, in a small, badly-



Cliff Harper after Tenniel

lit, badly-ventilated, stinking and, often, damp cell with two others doing the same.

Prisoners have no right to work. The privilege of working can be withdrawn as a punishment – if worthwhile work is available in the first place. Prisoners cannot join a trade union to act for them over conditions of work, rates of pay, safety, etc. Many prisoners work in conditions which significantly breach health and safety standards. The Prison Inspectorate over the years has uncovered widespread and serious fire hazards in prisons jammed with prisoners locked in cells. Yet prisons remain immune from statutory fire regulations.

Prisoners are denied access to the National Health Service except at the discretion of prison authorities. Necessary medical treatment may be delayed or even denied. On the other hand, there is substantial evidence of unnecessary medical treatment – use of behaviour-modifying drugs – being imposed on prisoners for 'control' purposes. The Home Office can, and does, deny independent autopsies on prisoners who die in prison. When Irish Republican prisoner Noel Jenkinson died in suspicious circum-

stances in Leicester prison in 1976, the Home Office would not allow any independent examination of his body.

All prisoners' right to links with their families is severely restricted, at best. Despite Home Office 'concern' prisoners are frequently held in prisons a long way from their families, making visits difficult or impossible. There is no right to privacy in family visits (and no right to conjugal visits). In the case of women prisoners, especially single mothers, there are nowhere near enough 'family' units to meet the demand. Prisoners are only entitled, as of right, to six hours' visiting time a year.

Prisoners may be put in solitary confinement under Rule 43 without committing any offence, or coming before any tribunal. There is no limit to the length of time they may spend in solitary. Prisoners have no right to legal representation in internal hearings though they have recently won a discretionary right.

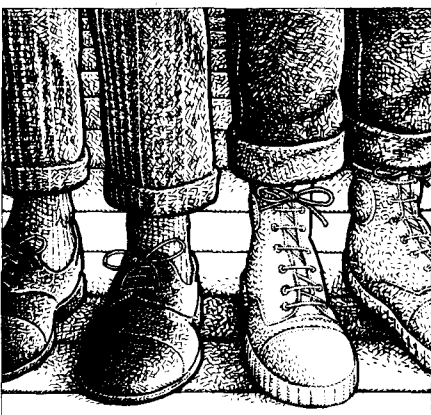
In short, prisoners have no civil rights at all and are subject to the absolute authority of prison officers. They do not even have the right to vote.

Gay rights

THE RIGHT to a sexual life is recognised as part of young people's emergence into adulthood. But for male homosexuals that means only when they reach the age of 21; for everyone else it is 16. Sexual activity between gay men has to be in private – the presence of a third person, or even access of other people to a bedroom containing the consenting couple can, in the eyes of the law, make the sex act an offence.

Displays of physical affection between men in public can be deemed indecent or offensive. If gay men chat each other up they attract charges of persistently soliciting or importuning in a public place for immoral purposes. It has been confirmed in court that the term 'immoral purposes' applies even to lawful homosexual activity. Despite the passing of the Sexual Offences Act 1967 liberalising the law, the number of convictions of gay men has increased considerably.

Laws on lesbianism were thought to be undesirable when they were considered in 1921. It was thought they would bring 'lesbianism to the notice of women who had never heard of it.' And so it remains. But an industrial tribunal has ruled that it was lawful for a firm to sack a woman for overt lesbianism. (Homosexuality, of women, or men, in the armed forces is grounds for dishonourable discharge.) Although lesbianism is not unlawful, in many custody disputes judges have ruled that a woman's lesbianism, in itself, makes her an unfit mother.



Cliff Harper

Tisdall for allegedly leaking information on the arrival of cruise missiles to the *Guardian*; and the use of that Act to search Duncan Campbell's premises. Similar searches have already been made of the premises of Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth. The treatment of Mr Campbell raises the most pointed civil libertarian and ethical concerns. To add to the physical injury of an accident the indignity of forcible search of his personal effects is unconscionable, if not unlawful. There is a tort called unlawful interference with property; anyone who seizes a person's property against their will commits this tort.

The search of Mr Campbell's home was made under magistrate's warrant. It is time to suggest a complete re-think on the issue of such warrants which, particularly where the Special Branch is concerned, has become a rubber stamp. The police can effectively choose which magistrate to seek a warrant from; as a result some magistrates who might require some substantial evidence or justification before issuing a warrant are almost never asked. There are in any case serious questions to be asked about the appointment of magistrates: whether the process is sufficiently open and whether magistrates fairly reflect the social, racial and sexual composition of the communities they serve.

There has been a sustained attack on the trade union movement which affects the civil rights of workers to organise collectively, to assemble, to withdraw labour and to express opinions. The recent trade union legislation does not remove the right to picket but limits it to such an extent that it is ineffective. There have been persistent fears of political vetting in employment and substantiated claims that workers, for example in the civil service or at British Nuclear Fuels, have been disciplined for expressing their opinions. The government sought to introduce lie detectors at GCHQ Cheltenham which were rejected by the unions because of their unreliability and for their potential of interfering with the freedoms of their members. The latest government decision goes right to the heart of the matter – to deprive a person of the right to choose whether to belong to a trade union.

This week the NCCL celebrates its 50th anniversary. The concerns over police powers, emergency powers in Northern Ireland and the unnecessary secrecy which surrounds government activities are distressingly similar to the issues prevalent 50 years ago. But new issues arise in 1984 which were undreamed of in 1934. Our technological society makes it possible to store and retrieve almost limitless amounts of personal information. Yet the person concerned cannot see any of this information to determine whether it is relevant, accurate or up to date. There have also been recent decisions to 'monitor traffic' by the use of hidden cameras on the M1 and M25 and, 'for planning purposes' to take aerial photographs. These activities lead one to wonder how much our movements will be watched by future governments with even more sophisticated technology, and for what purpose. The use of surveillance, despite its

enormous potential for invading personal privacy, is not governed by the rule of law. In effect there is a Parliamentary *carte blanche* for the use of aural and visual surveillance by government and private firms.

We are starting to come to terms with the cost of entering the nuclear age. Nuclear weapons and nuclear energy are such inherently dangerous activities that they bring with them a new dimension in the level of security and secrecy needed to protect nuclear establishments. The Defence Secretary's statement that he would not prevent the killing of protesters coming too near to weapons at Greenham Common shows the frightening civil liberty implications attached to security. There have also been persistent attempts to stifle public demonstration and dissent, including the recent announcement to 'build a road' which happens to run through the Greenham Women's Peace Camp. The secrecy aspects are illustrated by the case of Trevor Brown, a Liberal County Councillor who was disciplined when he publicly criticised the health and safety standards at Aldermaston Atomic Weapons Research Establishment.

When all of this 'public order' legislation and Executive action is viewed as a whole we see a pattern of neglect of the nation's liberties without recent precedent. It is essential that emotional calls for more law and order and national security are carefully balanced against the infringements of individual liberties that are the result of these policies. □

Larry Gostin is General Secretary of NCCL.

CIVIL LIBERTIES 1.9.8.4

Edited by
Peter Wallington

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Martin Robertson Oxford

Married women

ALL WOMEN suffer discrimination: they do not have equal rights and liberties with men. While it is debatable whether the Sex Discrimination and Equal Pay Acts have made women equal in law (if not in practice), there is no doubt about married women: the British State still treats the married woman as her husband's financial dependant and his sexual property.

The Sex Discrimination Act excludes from its ambit legislation passed before it came into force in 1975. This means that discrimination in social security benefits, taxation and immigration continues.

It has taken an EEC Directive to eradicate



some glaring aspects of discrimination against married women in the provision of social security benefits. While the EEC passed the Directive in 1978, the UK has taken the maximum amount of time, six years, to implement the principles of equal treatment contained in it. Even now, married and cohabiting women can only claim *supplementary benefit* if they satisfy certain conditions, with the agreement of the man they live with.

At present married and cohabiting women have to prove that they cannot do housework in order to claim the *non-contributory invalidity pension* for married women (single women and all men do not have to prove this). While the new scheme coming into force in 1985 is not on the face of it discriminatory, it is likely to discriminate indirectly against married women.

For the purposes of the *tax system* a married woman's earnings belong to her husband (although she can opt to be treated as a single person). The married man's allowance makes a mockery of the equal pay legislation. A married man and a married woman doing the same job and earning the same pay will take home different amounts in their pay packets. The man will take home £5.32 a week more because he is married and male.

The *Immigration Rules* allow foreign wives of men living in this country to live here with their husbands. They do not allow the foreign husbands of all women living in the UK to come to live here with their wives. Women who were not born here or do not have a parent or grandparent who was born here are banned from living in this country with their foreign husbands.

Provisions for *retirement* and death are also discriminatory. Pensions benefits can rarely be transferred to a male spouse, and part-time workers, usually married women, are not eligible to join most pensions schemes.

If a man has sexual intercourse with his wife

without her consent he is not guilty of rape. The law assumes that 'in marriage she hath given up her body to her husband'. Attempts to make *rape in marriage* unlawful have not succeeded. ●

Mental illness

MENTAL HEALTH law affects the lives of the mentally ill in the one area of medicine where people can be admitted to hospital against their will, receive treatment without their consent and lose other civil liberties. The *Mental Health Act 1983* can deprive a mentally disordered person of his or her liberty. Sections 2 (assessment), 3 (treatment) and 4 (emergency admission) provide for compulsory admission to hospital. Sections 5(2) or 5(4) provide for the compulsory detention by a doctor or a nurse of patients already in hospital voluntarily.

These powers can be reviewed by a Mental Health Review Tribunal and under the 1983 Act patients detained under section 2 (for assessment) can also now apply for a tribunal as well as patients detained under longer term sections. Deprivation of liberty can therefore be challenged and legal aid (Assistance by way of Representation) is now available providing a fairer and more rigorous review. There is *no* right of appeal to a tribunal for patients detained under sections 4 (72 hours), 5(2) (72 hours) 135 and 136 (72 hours each).

Section 136 gives powers to the police to remove to a 'place of safety' any person found in a public place who appears to be suffering from mental disorder. This usually means to a police cell or a hospital. There is no right to contact a solicitor and the person is deprived of rights pending assessment.

Patients who are detained for more than 72 hours can be given medical treatment against their will, unless sections 57 and 58 of the Mental Health Act apply. ECT and medication can be given without the patient's consent if a second medical opinion appointed by the Mental Health Act Commission (set up to review the care and treatment of detained patients) confirms that treatment should be given.

A patient wishing to sue a person who has acted in accordance with the provisions of the Mental Health Act must show reasonable grounds for the contention that the person acted in bad faith or without reasonable care (section 139). Permission to initiate civil proceedings must be given by the High Court; permission in respect of criminal proceedings must be granted by the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Detained patients have no right to vote. Voluntary patients are entitled to use their last non-hospital address (or an address where they would be if not in hospital) and have to obtain a postal vote.

Being detained ('sectioned') under the Mental Health Act also has consequences for future employment prospects, emigration applications and insurance policies.

There is currently no statutory protection for mentally ill and mentally handicapped persons involved in police investigations. The *Police and Criminal Evidence Bill* proposes to introduce safeguards (in a Code of Practice only) which aim to protect people who are detained and who police have reason to believe are mentally disordered. These safeguards include contacting the nearest relative or other responsible adult and interviewing of suspects by police in the presence of the nearest relative or other responsible adult. Breach of the provisions of the Code of Practice will render a police officer liable to disciplinary procedure only. ●

Christine Roche

Secrecy in the bones

Peter Hennessy

THE BRITISH have a genius for administrative secrecy. It is the one activity in which their leadership of the western world has not been challenged since 1945. Secrecy is built into the calcium of a British policy maker's bones. It is the very essence of their concept of 'good government'.

The advocates of freedom of information have, therefore, an immensely tough task on their hands. The quickest way of illustrating it is to draw up a balance of the forces of open and closed government in Britain.

The first secrecy convention, the Privy Counsellor's Oath of Confidentiality, dates back to 1250. It was devised, no doubt, by some priestly bureaucrat to stop leaky members of the Court feeding information to the more tiresome members of the early English Parliament. Like all its successor codes, statutes and conventions, it failed utterly to distinguish between serious and minor seepages. All information entrusted to a privy counsellor in confidence is covered. The oath still has bite. A Minister of State will suddenly receive much more highly classified material when the initials PC are added to his name. Whitehall treats it as the politicians' equivalent of the Boy Scout's oath of honour.

Another ancient pillar of the constitution that proved serviceable as a prop to private government when the freedom of information issue crawled up the British political agenda in the 1970s is the convention of collective Cabinet responsibility. It was originally developed in the 1770s as a practical anti-monarch device to stop George III, in his fits of sanity, from interrogating ministers separately to find out what was really going on in Cabinet. Ministers would meet to fix and memorise a collective line in advance before answering their individual summons to the royal presence.

The convention was used to considerable effect 200 years later by Labour ministers intent on wriggling out of the freedom of information pledge embedded in their election manifesto of October 1974. Wrapped in the noble folds of the constitution, they could appear high-minded when engaged in a naked attempt to avoid political inconvenience and embarrassment.

A rash of leaks from Victorian moles led in 1873 to Sir Ralph Lingens, the Permanent Secretary to the Treasury, to issue another directive squarely in the tradition of indiscriminate devotion to secrecy. 'The unauthorised use of official information', he declared, 'is the worst fault a civil servant can commit. It is on the same footing as cowardice by a soldier'. Sir Ralph's strictures clearly went unheeded. In 1889 Parliament passed the first of four Official Secrets Acts (surely the most glaring

example of legislative overkill in modern times?)

The second secrecy statute, the notorious catch-all section 2 of the 1911 Act, was the product of a remarkably fruitful period for the Asquithian guardians of national security. From the inventive collective mind of the Committee of Imperial Defence (a kind of Edwardian national security council) there emerged in swift succession the Security Service, MI5 (1909), the Secret Intelligence Service, MI6 (1911), and the *D-Notice system* (1912) whereby newspaper proprietors were persuaded to cajole their editors into voluntary self-censorship on defence and intelligence matters in peacetime. When launching their own freedom of information bill in 1978, the Liberals omitted to apologise for landing the country with section 2 in the first place.

The period between the Kaiser's war and Hitler's war saw two more Official Secrets Acts (1920 and 1939) and the foundation of the Government Information Service in 1931 with the appointment of a press spokesman in No 10. This was intended not to quicken the flow of information, but to protect ministers and civil servants from Fleet Street. But for the Canterbury Cathedral of British administrative secrecy, *Estacode*, the Civil Service's bible of do's and don'ts, we had to wait until 1942 (one would have thought that financing the war would have kept the Treasury too busy for that kind of thing. Not so).

Paragraph 9904 of *Estacode* is for connoisseurs. It should be rolled on the tongue and

savoured as the tightest definition of administrative secrecy ever to flow from an official's pen. It states:

Under the Official Secrets Acts, 1911 and 1920, it is an offence for an officer to disclose to an unauthorised person, either orally or in writing, any information he has acquired through his official duties unless he has received official permission.

At this point, an unexpected dose of liberalism is injected.

There is, however, no objection to his repeating information which has already officially been made public.

But, lest the crown servant fear hallucination, the iron grill of secrecy falls once more.

The Official Secrets Acts cover material published in a speech, lecture, radio or television broadcast, in the Press or in book form; they cover non-secret as well as secret information, and apply not only during an officer's employment but also when he has retired or left the service.

Perfect drafting! It catches the crown servant from the cradle to the grave. He regains his civil rights only when he is six feet under. Nobody this side of the Iron Curtain has ever done it better.

The postwar years saw regular and routine reminders of the confidentiality rules circulated throughout Whitehall, more and more additions to the classified equivalent of *Estacode* for politicians, *Questions of Procedure for Ministers*, and gems like the Cabinet Office's special secret guidelines, *Talking about the Office*, which coaches civil servants in the cover stories they must use when asked what they do at parties.

In 1980 Whitehall produced another masterpiece to add to its collection of peerless museum-pieces — the 'Osmotherly Rules', so-called after the Assistant Secretary who drafted them on the instructions of Lord Bancroft, then Head of the Home Civil Service. The idea was to limit the potential

In 1984 the National Council for Civil Liberties (NCCL) is seeking a broad civil liberties alliance with new members from every walk of life and across the political spectrum.

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damage that could be inflicted on the private world of the permanent secretary by the new Commons Select Committees founded to shadow departments. Mr Osmotherly managed to find 60 rules, all of them prohibitions. For example, an official appearing before a committee must not be lured into talking about

1. Interdepartmental exchanges on policy issues;
2. Civil Service advice to Ministers;
3. The level at which decisions were taken and the manner in which a Minister consulted his colleagues;
4. Questions 'in the field of political controversy'.

In short, elected MPs were to be denied any real knowledge of the inside workings of the Whitehall machine and any chance of making the brokers of concealed power accountable to the sovereign Parliament.

The cleric who drafted the Privy Counsellor's Oath would have been proud of Mr Osmotherly. The culture of secrecy had survived intact seven centuries of war and revolution, reformation and renaissance and, most surprisingly, the advent of mass popular democracy.

RANGED against this cornucopia of restrictions is a tiny collection of measures intended to enhance public access to information. The most important of these is the *Croham Directive* of 1977, drafted by the then Head of the Home Civil Service on the instructions of Mr James Callaghan to head-off pressure for a full-blown freedom of information measure. Under it ministers were obliged to release more material voluntarily. Officials were to prepare documents in such a way that factual and analytical material was easily separable for publication purposes from policy advice which could remain subject to the 30-year rule. It had minimal impact. In 1983 the Cabinet Office asked permanent secretaries to produce an analysis of the fruits of Croham. In 1984

Lord Gowrie, Minister for the Civil Service, refused to release their replies. The results of the open government enquiry will remain closed until January 2014.

Mrs Thatcher's own minute to Cabinet colleagues of June 1979 urging them to greater voluntary openness suffered a similar fate. It will reach the public domain in 2010, by which time she may have been eased out of No 10. Add to the Croham Directive the Bray Amendment to the Industry Act, 1975, which obliged the Treasury to publish economic forecasts and to allow public access to its model of the economy, and you have a set of tiny, low-calibre weapons to deploy against Whitehall's huge arsenal of secrecy provisions.

There are lessons for the freedom of information lobby in this imbalance of forces. Reform will not be effective unless three problems are remedied simultaneously.

● There needs to be a replacement for section 2 of the Official Secrets Act, 1911, restricting the sanction of criminal law to a narrow band of matters genuinely linked to national security, crime detection and the privacy of the individual.

● The grain of British government and administration must be reversed so that everything shall be open unless good reason can be shown for its closure. To achieve that, given the degree of Whitehall's devotion to confidentiality probably nothing less than a freedom of information act backed up by the courts will do.

● The Civil Service rulebook must be rewritten from beginning to end to reflect the new climate. Statutory reform would have minimal effect if *Estacode* remained.

By British standards, where the pace of reform is usually glacial, the freedom of information issue has come in from the cold very fast. Until the mid-1970s it was the preserve of a tiny corner of radical chic with a foothold in the Labour and Liberal parties. Now it is all but a part of the mainstream political agenda. Every British party

leader, except the Prime Minister, naturally, is committed to it in unequivocal terms. It seems only a matter of time before seven centuries of tradition is swept away. □

Peter Hennessy is a leader writer with The Times.

Sources Close to the Prime Minister, a critique of secrecy and lobby journalism, by Michael Cockerell, Peter Hennessy and David Walker, will be published by Macmillan in June at £8.95.

Freedom of Information

James Cornford

REFORM OF the law relating to official information must embrace four aspects: the protection of official information and government confidentiality; legitimate public access to official information; safeguarding of personal privacy; the maintenance of an efficient system of official record keeping and a proper national archive. All are closely related and the purpose of reform should be to produce a coherent regime embracing all of them. Some people would argue that freedom of information also relates closely to freedom to publish and that the reform of the laws of defamation and confidence should be included in any comprehensive settlement.

What is not in dispute is the central and discreditable position of the Official Secrets Acts, and especially S. 2 of the Act of 1911, which imposes a blanket protection of all information by the threat of criminal sanctions for unauthorised disclosure of any information however trivial. It thus reinforces a system in which the government has an absolute discretion over information in its possession, with the exception of the limited rights of access guaranteed by the Public Records Act 1958 and a handful of other statutes.

It is generally agreed that the Official Secrets Acts need to be replaced by a much more tightly drawn measure, in which criminal sanctions should apply only to matters such as national security, personal privacy and the use of official information for private gain. There are important differences about the exact nature of the replacement and Mrs Thatcher's attempt, the Protection of Official Information Bill of 1979, left out crucial safeguards and had to be dropped in the wake of the Blunt affair. But even a satisfactory reform of the Official Secrets Acts would not be enough. It would still leave the control of information in the hands of government, albeit less formidably protected, though the sanctions on civil servants would remain formidable enough.

What is needed is a general public right of access to official information, such as now exists in Scandinavia, the USA, Australia,

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New Zealand, Canada, the Netherlands and even France. This general right would be limited by exemptions covering such matters as national defence and security, law enforcement, commercial confidentiality and personal privacy. There is general agreement about exemptions in principle, though again there are important differences of practice and opinion in the way the exemptions are drawn and adjudicated. Some countries exempt whole classes of documents, others allow argument on the intention of the exemptions. The first makes for certainty and administrative convenience, the second for greater access and more conflict. A second major difference concerns the definition of an official document, that is of what the public has a right of access to. In some cases this is limited to official correspondence, formal minutes and decisions; in others it is to the working files of departments. Again one is restricted and manageable, the other more liable to be disruptive but more open and effective for the enquirer.

A public right of access with exemptions would, in conjunction with a reform of S. 2 of the Official Secrets Act 1911, create three categories of official information:

1. information exempted from access and protected by the criminal sanctions, such as information touching national security;
2. information exempt from disclosure, but not protected by criminal sanctions, such as domestic policy papers; and
3. information to which there is a public right of access, e.g. personal files and what Sir Douglas Wass described as the wealth of data in the field of factual and analytical material collected by government, only a small part of which is currently made available.

The middle category is frequently overlooked, but is important: we should have no more of such ludicrous incidents as the police raid on the office of the *Railway Gazette* in search of papers on British Rail closures.

There are three major objections to a public right of access, political, constitutional and administrative. The political objection is at once the easiest to understand and the most difficult to overcome. Information is power and the present system is immensely convenient for ministers and senior civil servants. The constitutional objection embraces the sacred cow of ministerial responsibility, the relationship of ministers and civil servants, and the anonymity and political neutrality of civil servants. The administrative objection is the disruption and cost of reorganizing the system of departmental records to make access practicable. The problems are the sheer bulk of records, the fact that the files are organized for the working purposes of the department and not for outside access, and that departments necessarily destroy a large proportion of their records before they are transferred to the Public Records Office.

The political objections can only be overcome by persuasion. Politicians have to be convinced that whatever the immediate

advantages of secrecy, their policies will be more fully considered, better understood, more acceptable and more readily implemented if they allow Parliament and the public greater participation in the process of policy making. The present leaders of the major opposition parties are persuaded of this and are committed to legislation. It remains to get one of them made Prime Minister.

On the constitutional side there are two possibilities. One is to go for a limited reform in which advice, recommendation or opinion tendered for the purpose of policy making is exempted from access. This respects the present conventions, the privacy of internal government discussions, and the anonymous role of civil servants. This line has been adopted by the 1984 Campaign for Freedom of Information. A more radical approach would acknowledge the weakness of ministerial responsibility and open up the effective power of the senior civil service to greater public scrutiny. Proposals of this kind would probably be allied with a readiness to tamper with the tradition of a closed career civil service.

The difficulties on the administrative side are serious, so serious that it would be wise not to make any legislation retrospective and to provide a longish time for reorganization before the legislation came into force. Then the opportunity ought to be taken to introduce electronic systems of record management throughout Whitehall. This would have great administrative advantages and arrangements for public access could then be built in at marginal extra cost.

Experience abroad can help with a number of problems, even though historical and constitutional differences make wholesale importation difficult and undesirable. Sweden has the oldest established system of access, dating back to the constitution of 1766, which demonstrates how public access can become an integral part of the process of administration. The US Freedom of Information Act is the most ambitious in the extent of access and the one that has given rise to the most conflict and litigation. We can draw both positive and negative lessons

from American experience, particularly in relation to any exemption on grounds of commercial confidentiality. The extent of protection which ought to be afforded to information which has been required from companies by government is a major issue. We do not want a Freedom of Information Act to become an instrument for acquiring trade secrets, nor do we want guarantees of confidentiality to prevent public access to information on such matters as environmental pollution, product safety or hazards at work.

On the constitutional side more direct lessons are likely to be drawn from the experience of FOI in the Commonwealth. Those from Australia and New Zealand, where the legislation is weak, are likely to serve as a warning. For instance in New Zealand it has soon and not surprisingly been found that to leave the final judgement on granting access to ministers is to invite a veto. On the other hand the recent Canadian legislation which backs up the Information Commissioner with appeal to the courts looks more promising. Is it conceivable that judicial review, commonly detested in Whitehall and Westminster alike, may be invoked to enforce a measure deliberately aimed at weakening the monopoly of the executive? I suspect that nothing less will answer. □

James Cornford is the Chairman (policy) of the 1984 Campaign for Freedom of Information, and Director of the Nuffield Foundation

Other contributors to this supplement include: Rachel Hodgkin, Children's Legal Centre; Fiona Mactaggart, General Secretary, Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants; Terry O'Halloran; Ann Sedley, Women's Rights Officer, NCCL; Lydia Sinclair, Legal Officer, MIND; Christian Wolmar.

TORTURE in the Eighties

An AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL Report



The focus for Amnesty's 1984 campaign, *Torture* is essential reading for all concerned with human rights.

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Martin Robertson Oxford

Technology and liberty

Duncan Campbell

CIVIL LIBERTY is threatened less by sophisticated new surveillance technology *per se* than by the lack of legal controls over the use of surveillance methods and devices. Except in extreme situations — such as kidnap sieges — there are few occasions when the police or other authorities can gain more worthwhile information from exotic surveillance technologies and devices than they could from the more common methods — reading political publications, and using snoopers, agents and informers.

The technological threat to liberty therefore comes only indirectly, from the availability of inexpensive microcomputers and machine intelligence — although that threat is developing. Concern should primarily be focussed on legal measures and official working practices, including the proposed Police Bill and Data Protection Bill, which licence the police and other agencies to continue gathering and storing intelligence about individuals, without prior or subsequent check or restraint.

The technology of a telescreen (as in 1984) or a telephone tap in every home does not offer an effective means of keeping all political activity under control. British security

agencies have long specialised in identifying and neutralising the leadership of political movements. They aim at individuals and groups who are most exposed, or on the margins of legal or political acceptability. They are the easiest to watch and civil liberties are generally won, or lost by marginal groups. Many political police actions are designed simply *pour encourager les autres*, whether they be directed against peace women, anarchists, or alleged official secrets leakers.

More important than identifying political leaders is the maintenance of a judicial regime which despite the purported neutrality of the legal code operates selectively against non-establishment political activity.

Technical devices, surveillance agencies and agents all fit into this framework. All activists in the Labour and trades union movement can expect to be at least at the fringes of Special Branch surveillance for much of their political lives. Those who are currently active in the peace movement can expect to enjoy the centre stage of such secret monitoring.

Political surveillance is officially legitimised by defining its targets as 'subversive'. In 1975, a Labour Home Office minister, Lord Harris, defined subversion as the desire to 'undermine or overthrow parliamentary democracy by political, industrial or violent means'. So comprehensive is this that campaigning for improvements in parliamentary democracy can be — and is — interpreted by security agencies as 'undermining' the current weak form of parliamentary democracy.

Although devices like *telephone taps* are far more widely used than the figures issued by the Home Office suggest — they are used far less than most people may imagine. Most (non-criminal) people who believe their telephones to be tapped are overestimating their own importance. Although there is no external check on the amount of telephone tapping, the need to employ human listeners most of the time to transcribe tapped conversations makes widespread surveillance prohibitively expensive. However, new voice-recognition technology will in time reduce the cost of tapping phones.

Similarly, although some electronic listening *bugs* are capable of remarkable eavesdropping performances, these devices are only worth using in operations of such importance that the complexity of planting and using a bug is justified. (The House of Lords vote this week for further legal restrictions on taps is unlikely to survive Conservative opposition in the Commons.)

Computers pose a different but growing threat. As more and more social administration comes to rely on computers and auto-



Montage: Peter Kennard

matic data processing support, so the information pool that may be tapped for sensitive personal information is growing. In the United States, the mere fact that government agencies *may* be gathering or storing information about particular types of person has in the past been held by the Supreme Court to have a 'chilling' effect on constitutional rights, and therefore to be unlawful. No specific adverse effect need be proved.

Britons have no such rights. The operation of official databanks and filing systems damages civil liberties through:

- The intrusion which may be experienced when information is gathered;
- The effects if information is, during storage, linked in ways or diverted for purposes not originally intended or authorised;
- The transfer of information out of a databank or filing system to agencies or others who use it adversely against the subject.

Manifestly, information which remains in a databank *without* ever being withdrawn or passed on can do little or no damage to its subject. But one effect of the Police Bill and similar measures will be to enable the police both to gather more personal information and to use their existing computer network to carry out more frequent routine computer checks.

Although a question mark still hangs over the death of the Special Branch informer Kenneth Lennon in 1974, the British government does not resort to 'extreme measures' against political adversaries on the UK mainland. Such illegalities are not necessary. There is, however, much less

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compunction about what in the United States are colloquially called 'back bag' jobs – illegal break-ins and burglaries. Britain has two schools for such politically-motivated burglary – the Army's Intelligence Centre at Ashford, Kent, and the SIS training school at Fort Monkton, near Gosport. The offices, homes and vehicles of organisers of important political campaigns and some major strikes during the 1970s were broken into in intelligence-gathering

operations.

Official surveillance technology does affect civil liberty, but it is easy to be overimpressed by the power of technology – the implied political potency of a thousand, or a million, tape recorders. Although there are no safeguards to prevent state organs gathering political intelligence on British citizens, its use and the damage it causes depend more on the law and public attitudes than machinery. □

The threats

Tapping

Most official telephone tapping is centralised in London. The tapping centre, colloquially known to the police as 'Tinkerbell', was until 1982 located in Ebury Bridge Road, Chelsea, and had a capacity of about 1,000 lines. Systems using primitive voice recognition equipment had begun to come into use in 1980. The centre, which had up to 200 staff, was disguised as the British Telecom OP5 'Equipment Development Division'.

Following exposure of 'Tinkerbell' in the *New Statesman* four years ago, the Ebury Bridge Road tapping centre was first renamed and then moved. It was at first retitled the ES4 'Equipment Development Policy Division'; now it has no name at all. A new telephone tapping centre is believed to have been fitted out by the government Property Services Agency in the Westminster area, and – although still staffed and run by British Telecom – is under the supervision of GCHQ, which has a London office in Palmer St, Westminster.

The European Court of Human Rights is currently reviewing the administration of British telephone tapping, which is officially claimed to be carried out only after a warrant is obtained from a Secretary of State (usually the Home Secretary). Since 1980, the ability of computers to recognise human voices has improved dramatically. Late in 1981, an early version of an automatic speech recogniser unit secretly developed by the government's Joint Speech Research Unit – part of the GCHQ intelligence agency in Cheltenham – was announced and released to the commercial market.

Official telephone tapping is, for all practical purposes, undetectable by victims by technical means. Agencies using information from telephone taps have, however, frequently given themselves away by taking direct and detectable action which could only result from telephone interception. Many people who might reasonably expect to be the target of official telephone tapping activity have also had curious experiences of having their telephone conversations played back on the phone to them while they are speaking. This should not and cannot technically result from normal tapping equipment; such activity may however be a form of harassment.

Technical surveillance

Laser bugging is the most exotic of a range of snooping tools developed at the Home Office's special laboratories at Sandridge, near St Albans, Herts. A laser bug can eavesdrop on conversations inside rooms, at a distance – but its effectiveness is usually limited by factors such as dirt on the windows and traffic noise.

Other types of bugs including 'listening, recording . . . transmitting and tracking equipment' are also available to police and

security services, according to Home Office guidelines issued in July 1977. The guidelines say that any Chief Constable, or deputy, or an Assistant Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police can authorise the use of bugs.

Mail is opened in London by the 'Special Section' of the Post Office Investigation Division, who have a specialised second floor letter-opening suite at Union House, near St Pauls' Cathedral. In the provinces, senior postal supervisors open letters. For practical reasons, letter opening is more limited in scope than tapping; it also is stated to require a warrant.

International telephone calls, telex messages and telegrams are intercepted at GCHQ Cheltenham and by joint British and American outstations at Morewenstow, near Bude and Menwith Hill, Harrogate. All international written messages, such as telex, are automatically processed and analysed; telephone calls are monitored more selectively, according to target countries and telephone numbers.

Other telephone monitoring systems include 'printermeters' which monitor numbers dialled. More extensive monitoring of numbers called is being introduced as 'itemised billing' by British Telecom, who also run an unpublicised Telephone Service Observation system with, in London, 80 full-time monitoring positions from which supervisors listen to telephone calls at random.

Political surveillance

Political intelligence about individuals and groups is collected and held primarily by the police Special Branch and by the Security Service ('M15'). Both organisations operate both computerised and paper file information systems, with millions of names on file. Although the Special Branch is not a national force, it is centrally directed by the Security Service, who issue instructions to Special Branches to collect information they may require.

The Security Service is believed not to have any fulltime provincial offices, except in Edinburgh and Belfast. But regional liaison officers provide a direct link between M15 and each local Special Branch. They are colloquially known as 'Boxmen' – derived from 'Box 500', the cover identity used by Security Service agents in their dealings with other civil servants and police forces.

Most Chief Constables like to assert that their Special Branch units are autonomous and under their direct control. This tends to be true only of the 'routine' SB activity such as keeping watch at ports and airports. Special teleprinters and scramblers, paid for by the Home Office, link the Special Branch in each police headquarters to the Security Service headquarters in Mayfair.

An entire section of M15 – 'F' Division – is entirely concerned with so-called 'domestic subversion'. The agents and officers of F Division concentrate primarily on left-wing or (Celtic) nationalist political parties and groups.

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Police Bill

Louise Christian

THE POLICE BILL threatens civil rights both by taking away existing liberties and by legitimising current abuses. The abuses which undoubtedly take place now (e.g., random stop and search, violent arrests, long detentions without charge without access to a lawyer) can do so because the law which governs police powers is a vague and confused hotch-potch of common and statute law.

The government has said that the purpose of the Bill is to 'clarify' the existing law but the Bill is hideously complicated – even more so than the present law.

It creates new powers based on undefined and subjective concepts e.g., 'a serious arrestable offence', an 'affront to public decency', 'special procedure material'. What the government has claimed to be a 'simplification of the arrest powers will mean that an offence can be 'arrestable' or can have a 'preserved power of arrest' or can have a power of arrest if an 'arrest condition' is satisfied. Arrest is of course the most crucial stage of legalised police coercion. Obscurely worded laws benefit only lawyers but may also represent a smoke screen behind which rights disappear; the first and most fundamental right being to know what the law is.

But the Bill also takes away rights:

- to move freely and to protest peacefully (by new powers to stop and search and set up roadblocks, aid powers to arrest for trivial offences on grounds of obstruction);
- to enjoy personal privacy and freedom from surveillance (by new powers to search homes and offices for 'evidence' and to take



names and addresses of persons committing trivial offences);

- to choose appearance or sexual preference (by new powers to arrest for trivial offences if a police officer thinks there has been an 'affront to public decency');

- not to be imprisoned or interned without charge (by new powers to detain without charge for up to 96 hours on suspicion of serious offences);

- to be free from unprovoked violence at the hands of the police, particularly violence which is degrading (by new powers to stop and search and take fingerprints and body samples by force and to carry out 'intimate body searches' of vaginas and anuses by force).

Some of the rights destroyed by the Bill are historic ones; freedom that people have fought for over centuries of British history. The existence of arbitrary executive powers (the prerogative power of the monarch) was one of the main issues over which the English civil war was fought in the seventeenth century. The result guaranteed the abolition of the Star Chamber and the establishment

of the right to apply for habeas corpus.

But the Police Bill creates a *twentieth century Star Chamber*; magistrates courts sitting in private which will authorise 96 hours detention without charge, using criteria set out in the Bill which will prejudice the ancient right of habeas corpus.

One consequence is likely to make invalid the *cherished right of silence*, long an integral part of the presumption of innocence fundamental to English criminal law. It legitimises detention for questioning and allows the police to use aggressive questioning (almost anything short of physical torture) to elicit a statement, with no right of access to a lawyer for the first 36 hours of detention. There are other examples too; the Bill's new powers to search for 'evidence' would certainly have horrified Pitt and other eighteenth century property owners who secured judicial declarations that an 'Englishman's home is his castle'. □

Louise Christian is the author of *Policing by Coercion – The Police and Criminal Evidence Bill*, published by The GLC, £1.50, and distributed by Pluto Press.

Data Protection

Martin Smith

BY THE government's own touching admission, the Data Protection Bill, currently being debated by a Commons Standing Committee, is modest in its ambitions. Its overt purpose is to enable the United Kingdom to ratify the Council of Europe's Convention on Automatic Data Processing (whether it will actually achieve this end is a matter of dispute). Failure to meet the Convention's requirements might imperil the continued activities of home-based commercial data processing businesses whose prosperity depends upon unimpeded trans-border data flows. The unstated purpose of the Bill, therefore, is to prevent the loss of data processing business to European (and US) competitors.

From a civil liberties' standpoint, the Bill is both disappointing and inadequate. There is a general bias in favour of 'data users' (government departments, commercial companies and others) as opposed to 'data subjects' (the general public).

The Data Protection Registrar, whose office is created in Part I of the Bill, will have a proposed staff of 20 and an annual budget of £650,000. This will be quite inadequate to cope with the flood of hundreds of thousands of applications for registration which will flow from the Bill's enactment.

In these circumstances it is a critical, but deliberate failing of the Bill as drafted that the Registrar's only unambiguous duty appears to be the laying of an annual report before Parliament. The minimum change

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necessary if the Registrar's activities are to command public confidence is that the Registrar should be under a clear duty to investigate complaints submitted by data subjects and to take appropriate corrective action.

The Bill's critics, who include the British Medical Association, the Law Society, the British Computer Society, the National Consumer Council and the National Council for Civil Liberties, have called for a variety of changes relating to:

- the inclusion of manual records within the scope of the Bill (their proposed exclusion will give rise to some fearful interpretative problems)
- procedures for the correction of erroneous information
- exemptions to subject access provisions
- data subjects' rights of appeal to the Tribunal, and other matters.

Unless the Government gives way to these criticisms, which seems improbable, the Data Protection Act will be a depressing statutory monument to the passage of the symbolic year 1984.

Martin Smith is Parliamentary Officer of the National Consumer Council.

Scotland

Rob Edwards

SCOTLAND'S legal, political and institutional structures are radically different from those in England and Wales. This means that there are many significant areas where citizens' civil liberties vary both in principle and in practice. Controversy in recent years has focused on a few specific issues where regressive powers have been introduced in advance of similar powers south of the border:

- The 1980 Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act gave the police extensive new powers to detain suspects for up to six hours for questioning without arrest, charge or access to legal advice. About 25,000 Scots a year are subjected to the procedure, more than half of them being released without any charges being brought. New powers to stop and search for suspected weapons were also introduced.

- A series of increasingly authoritarian laws have been brought in each year since 1981 to curb the rating and spending decisions of local authorities. This is seen as an important issue by the small civil liberties lobby in Scotland.

- The Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 gave local authorities extensive powers to control public marches and demonstrations. Although these were presented as measures which simply brought together existing local statutes, for many in Scotland they represented new restrictions on civil liberties. Authorities now have powers to ban marches for virtually any reason they wish (previously there had to be the possibil-

ity of 'serious public disorder').

Scotland's independent public prosecution system involving the *procurator fiscal* has attracted much admiration of late, with the Government planning a similar system for England and Wales. While there is no doubt that in principal it is preferable to leave the job of deciding on and directing prosecutions to someone other than the police, all is not rosy north of the border. Recent work by Scottish Office researchers found that procurator fiscals tended to standardise decisions on whether or not to prosecute according to legalistic criteria and administrative needs. Only in eight per cent of cases reported to them is the decision taken not to proceed. The fiscals' credibility depends on the police and vice versa - a situation which can create a too cosy relationship.

Scotland's juvenile justice based on the *children's hearing system* has been widely trumpeted as superior to juvenile courts in

the south. Designed to look after children's welfare rather than to hand out justice, the system probably does result in better treatment for children. However this can be at the cost of civil liberties. There has been mounting concern over children's rights in recent years, with some arguing that children's hearings are more prone to ignore important rights.

In one aspect Scots are clearly in a better position, thanks to the *110 day rule*. This is the equivalent to habeas corpus in England and Wales, only it limits the time for which any accused person can be held on remand in custody to no more than 110 days. If the accused is held in custody any longer, charges have to be dropped.

Scottish *trespass laws* are marginally better than England's, but there is no right to elect for trial by jury. The laws of debt collection involving warrant sales (the sale by auction of goods in the home) are probably more barbaric than south of the border. □

LONDON AGAINST RACISM

1984 sees the start of a major drive by the GLC to make people aware of the damaging and divisive effects of racism in London.

The facts of racial disadvantage ought to be well known, but too often people choose to ignore or condone them - especially the way larger organisations perpetuate racism in their structures and practices.

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Northern Ireland

Andy Pollak

NORTHERN Ireland has long had the worst record on civil liberties in the UK. But over the past two years the rights of the individual vis-à-vis the law have reached a new low. This is largely due to the use of uncorroborated 'supergrass' evidence to convict people accused of terrorist type offences.

Over 400 people have now been charged on the evidence of supergrasses. So far

nearly 100 of them have been released, often after many months on remand, when supergrass witnesses have either retracted their evidence or failed to withstand cross-examination in court. Nearly 140 are still awaiting trial, some having been in custody for over two years.

The supergrass strategy is believed to have been first suggested by former MI6 Chief Sir Maurice Oldfield during his period as Northern Ireland's security co-ordinator.

The role of the legal profession in the use of supergrasses is highly questionable. Last month the SDLP deputy leader Seamus Mallon launched an unprecedented attack on the Chief Justice Lord Lowry and his fellow judges in the 'Diplock courts' (see below). He accused them of failing to protect their independence and impartiality, and tolerating practices 'which bend the law and which were designed by the political administration to obtain the maximum number of convictions irrespective of the

consequences.'

Diplock courts were set up in 1973 by the *Emergency Provisions Act*, following the recommendations by Lord Diplock on changes in criminal procedure for Northern Ireland. He reported that proper convictions could not be secured because of intimidation of witnesses, 'perverse' acquittals by partisan juries and the strict rules on confessions. As a consequence, juries were dispensed with, and convictions made possible on confessions alone. These rules apply to those charged in the Emergency Provisions Act schedule of terrorist type offences — ie 'scheduled offences.'

Even this removal of normal civil liberties has been seen as insufficient. Added to the state's armoury are the little known *Bill of Indictment*, a procedure to avoid supergrass witnesses having to confront those they are accusing at preliminary public hearings; *mass trials* at which the only link between scores of charges against dozens of defendants is that they are based on the uncorroborated word of the same supergrass; the use by the RUC of *informers* as *agent provocateurs* to recruit people into illegal para-military organisations and to encourage them to commit terrorist crimes; and the *granting of immunity* to supergrasses charged with scores of serious crimes including, in at least one case, murder.

Lord Gifford QC wrote in *Supergrasses*, a Cobden Trust Report, last month that the most effective way of seeing justice done in Northern Ireland would be to restore trial by jury, if necessary with arrangements to protect the security and anonymity of jurors. Failing that he urged Parliament to legislate against the use of uncorroborated accomplice evidence in these no-jury courts.

The Diplock system has been shown recently to be open to abuse in other ways. A study by a Belfast legal academic, Dermot Walsh, published in December, showed that 40 per cent of convictions in Diplock courts were for offences that had nothing to do with terrorism, most of them being ordinary robberies.

And renewed concern has been expressed at what has been called the 'shoot to kill' policy of the security forces in Northern Ireland, notably the RUC and the UDR, (Ulster Defence Regiment). This followed a rash of killings in disputed circumstances of unarmed Republicans at the end of 1982, and came after similar controversy over the killings of nine people by plastic bullets in the previous two years. Despite the existence of detailed evidence into more than 80 such disputed killings since 1969, only a handful of cases have come to court, all of which have led to acquittals of security force members.

But there is still considerable unhappiness over what the Committee on the Administration of Justice, a highly respectable group of peace workers, academics and lawyers, last summer called 'the incomprehensible and utterly unacceptable obscurity and delay' which characterised RUC investigations into such killings. The Committee was particularly worried at delays of a year or more before inquests were held. Offering the highest legal authority to such abuses of the

Trade Unions

Jeremy McMullen

The following measures have been instituted since the Conservative government came to power.

Date	Measure	Effect
1979	Statutory Orders	Reduction of employers' obligations to consult TUs on redundancies; workers with less than one year's service denied unfair dismissal rights.
1980	Employment Act	Unfair dismissal, lay-off and maternity rights reduced; restrictions on action picketing; unions liable to pay compensation; comparability and recognition claims abolished; limited right to claim unfair dismissal for refusal to join closed shop.
1980	Industrial Tribunal Regulations	Tribunal claims filtered and vetted; award of costs made more likely.
1980	Codes of Practice on Picketing and Closed Shops	Restrictions on numbers and conduct of pickets and on the operation of union membership agreements.
1980	Social Security Acts	Government's obligation to uprate benefits in line with prices repealed; reduction of benefits to strikers' families; earnings related supplement abolished.
1980	Green Paper	TU activity, industrial action restricted: partly implemented.
1981	Finance Act	Benefits taxable.
1982	Social Security and Housing Benefits Act	Privatisation of sickness benefit; abolition of industrial injury benefit.
1982	Employment Act	TUs liable for damages; scope of lawful disputes restricted; action in support of union membership illegal; right to claim unfair dismissal from 1984 for refusal to join union unless 80 per cent of all employees vote for closed shop.
1982	Statutory Orders	Majority of Industrial Training Boards abolished.
1983	Wages Councils	Ministerial intervention to reduce wage awards.
1983	Rescinding of Fair Wages Resolution	No requirement on public contractors to pay fair wages.
1983	Denunciation of ILO Convention 95	Removal of ancient safeguards on manual workers' pay: consultation continuing.
1983	Proposal to repeal Truck Acts	— on company law reform, and employee participation (Vredeling): consultation continuing.
1983-84	Opposition to EEC Directives	Interference in internal TU elections and political affairs; industrial action further restricted.
1983-84	Trade Union Bill	Equal Pay Act amended to allow women to bring claims for work of equal value, to bring British law in line with European Directives.
1984	Statutory instrument	Removes employment protection rights of GCHQ, Cheltenham workers.
1984	Foreign Secretary's certificate	

Jeremy McMullen is an officer of the GMBATU.

rule of law, the Lord Chancellor Lord Hailsham wrote to the committee saying that there were 'legitimate policy reasons' as well as administrative reasons for these delays. □

Andy Pollak is a journalist on the Irish Times in Belfast.

Preventing Terrorism

Sarah Spencer

THE 'TEMPORARY' Prevention of Terrorism Act has now been with us for ten years and is being re-enacted, appropriately, in 1984. Described as 'draconian' by the Labour Home Secretary who introduced it, the Act defines terrorism as 'the use of violence for political ends' and applies throughout the United Kingdom. Until now, its powers have been confined to violence relating to the Northern Ireland conflict.

The Act gives the police and Government ministers exceptional powers which cannot be challenged in the courts: it allows a minister to *ban any organisation* he thinks is involved in 'terrorism'. Anyone who invites support in the UK for a banned organisation can be jailed for five years. The minister can also *banish from, or to, Northern Ireland* any UK citizen he believes is involved in 'terrorism'; the 'excluded' person having no right to know the evidence against him or her or to any trial. Over 300 people have thus been sent into internal exile since 1974. Thirdly, the Act gives a minister the power to authorise the *detention without charge for seven days* of someone 'reasonably suspected' of involvement in acts of terrorism (inland) or, at ports, of someone whom the police, immigration or customs officials simply want to question to ascertain whether they might be a suspect.

The statistics confirm that the Act's detention powers are used primarily for *information gathering*: of the 5,746 people detained in Britain since 1974, only 7.8 per cent have ever been charged and 4.8 per cent excluded. No less than 87.4 per cent were released without any charge or exclusion. In Northern Ireland, 3,453 have been detained of whom 42.6 per cent were charged and 0.8 per cent excluded. That is, over 50 per cent were released. Research has revealed that those who are detained are frequently not questioned about any specific offence but about their families, associates and political views.

Finally, the Act created the offence of '*withholding information*', breaching the suspect's traditional right to silence and, although this was not Parliament's original intention, laying journalists open to the

threat of prosecution if they interview 'terrorists' without giving details to the police.

Today, these provisions are being re-enacted, despite the now firm opposition of the Parliamentary Labour Party, by the Prevention of Terrorism Bill. It implements the recommendations of Lord Jellicoe, making minor improvements (eg only those resident in Britain or Northern Ireland for less than three years may be excluded) but also making one dramatic extension: the detention powers will now apply to anyone suspected of involvement in political violence anywhere in the world, whether or not the conflict has anything to do with the UK before or after the Act. The Free French could be detained, as could members of SWAPO. The only political violence the Act will not cover is '*domestic terrorism*', despite the best endeavours of Harvey Procter MP who envisages terrorists 'exploiting the racial ten-

sion in our cities' and Robert Key MP who asked: 'When does civil disobedience become terrorism?'. The Government assured Parliament that it would have 'no hesitation' in recommending the extension of the powers to domestic terrorism if the threat became more serious.

The history of this Act demonstrates that once powers have been introduced for violence with one motive — influencing the outcome of the Northern Ireland conflict — it becomes 'logical' to extend them to violence with an international motive, and then surely 'illogical' to exclude 'domestic terrorism'. Thus are civil liberties slowly but surely eaten away. The fallacy is that the powers were ever necessary, or acceptable, in the first place. □

Sarah Spencer works for the Cobden Trust

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Demos

Matthew Campbell

CONTRARY to popular wisdom, there is no right to demonstrate or hold public meetings in the streets of England and Wales; the myth of free speech belies the reality of restrictive laws and police powers which are wide and discretionary. Who gets arrested and for what has more to do with ease of conviction than offences alleged or committed, but the most common charges arising from demonstrations are 'threatening, insulting or abusive words or behaviour likely to cause a breach of the peace', closely followed by obstructing the highway, obstructing the police, and assault on the police. Where other charges are possible, the police will often ask you to stop what you are doing, then arrest for obstruction, where 80 per cent of prosecutions are successful.

Marches: If you are planning a march in E. Sussex, Oxfordshire, Wolverhampton, Greater Manchester, W. Midlands, Cheshire, Merseyside, S. Glamorgan or Teesside, local bylaws require you to give the police 2-3 days notice or face the prospect of having it broken up.

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Syndication International

Police can apply to ban all marches — and the public has no guaranteed right to demonstrate

The police also have powers, throughout the country, to impose conditions such as re-routing the march to ensure the free flow of traffic, or to avoid opposing groups clashing on the streets. Getting the route you want depends on negotiations with the police.

If the Chief Constable (or Commissioner in the Metropolitan Police area) feels that 'serious public disorder' may result he can ask the Home Secretary to impose a *ban*, which is invariably applied to *all* marches in an area during a three-month period.

The Met also has the power to disperse gatherings within an area roughly one mile around *Parliament* while it is sitting, if they consider the free passage of MPs may be obstructed. However orderly and well-stewarded your protest, it is the police who make on-the-spot decisions about what constitutes obstruction.

Trafalgar Square is out too, if you want to commemorate Bloody Sunday or support Troops Out, but OK if you support the Northern Ireland Peace Movement.

Failure to observe any of the above restrictions usually results in obstruction charges.

Banners can be removed by the police if they are 'threatening, etc', if they support the IRA, as a condition imposed by the Public Order Act or if the police decide that they are offensive weapons.

Open air meetings suffer the same fate as marches, particularly if held in parks or shopping precincts, where bylaws generally forbid everything you could possibly want to do on such an occasion.

Speech: What you say (or heckle) must not be 'threatening, abusive etc' or you will be liable to arrest without a warrant. Significantly, *incitement to racial hatred* requires the consent of the Attorney General before a case is brought, and is therefore not an arrestable offence.

Materials: Leafletting, selling newspapers and collecting signatures for a petition are all legal except where bylaws forbid, or if for commercial gain, but you could be charged

for distributing material supporting a proscribed organisation (the IRA) or which seduces a member of the forces from his or her duty. In London, 'profane, indecent or obscene' literature could land you in court.

You and the printer face a small fine for not printing the printer's *name and address* on the leaflet, but again the police are more likely to prohibit distribution and arrest for obstruction if you object.

Money can be collected at public meetings (bylaws permitting) from the people actually attending, but not door-to-door or on the streets without a licence.

Loudhailers are forbidden everywhere between 9pm and 8am, and some local bylaws impose other restrictions, such as 48 hrs written notice. ☐

Matthew Campbell works for Release.

Rule of law

Ole Hansen

THE RULE of law is supposed to be the citizen's safeguard against individual oppression. It is not effective protection, however, when

- the law cannot be used by the individual citizen without professional help;
- that help is extremely expensive and inaccessible;
- the judiciary fails to protect those who are most powerless;
- the government can, by changing the law, nullify unwelcome court decisions.

In the magistrates' courts, which deal with more than 95 per cent of criminal cases, defendants frequently seem to be little more than footballs in rapid verbal games between magistrates, court clerks, the police, and

should they be so lucky, the defendants' own lawyers. The civil courts are little better. Thirteen years ago, a *Justice* report spoke of 'the complex system of pre-trial practice and procedure (which) has been rightly compared to a maze'. It has not changed substantially since.

Few citizens feel they can make court procedure work for them, and this is true of how they put their case too. Court rules about the admissibility of evidence almost invariably exclude consideration of people's political or social motivation.

Most people rely on State-subsidised legal aid for the necessary professional help. However, even if they pass the stringent means tests and can pay the sometimes high contributions, they may not get legal aid. The magistrates' courts, for instance, have a wide discretion, and how capriciously it is exercised is shown every year by the official criminal statistics and individual case histories. In most tribunals – dealing with essential rights such as to a minimum income to compensation for loss of job, to freedom from unlawful discrimination, or to a family life – there is no general provision for professional help. The State, or the employer, is, of course, invariably represented, if not by a lawyer, then by a trained officer.

In any event, the legal profession is overwhelmingly dependent on private commercial and property work and this is reflected in its composition, training, skills and geographical location. Not that being represented in court, however expertly, ensures justice. At its highest reaches the judiciary has shown, with some consistency, that the rules of natural justice which will be invoked to protect the vital interests of the Freddie Lakers (who got his transatlantic licence through a ruling on natural justice) are not for welfare benefits claimants, students, immigrants, the homeless, council tenants, aliens or prisoners.

In the rare event of a successful legal challenge the government has a final option – to change the law. Frequently it can do so without the normal Parliamentary debate. Much legislation, especially in relation to welfare benefits is merely empowering – matters of principle, as well as detail, are left for ministers to enact by regulation. If the minister does not like a court or tribunal decision, it can be reversed within 24 hours by a new regulation.

While government manipulates the legal system it does not accept accountability for its proper functioning. It is the responsibility of the Lord Chancellor who sits in the House of Lords and who, when it is necessary, claims that since he is also head of the judiciary it would be constitutionally improper to subject him to normal Parliamentary scrutiny. Yet questions about resources and priorities in the provision of legal services and the system for appointment of judges and magistrates are political questions – and until they become part of the normal political debate, in the same way as are questions about health or social services, the rule of law will remain a myth for most people. □

Ole Hansen is Co-director of Legal Action Group.
New Statesman 24 February 1984

The Media

Geoffrey Robertson

BRITAIN, unlike most comparable Western democracies, enters 1984 without any legal commitment to the public's right to know. Freedom of information legislation is now an essential part of government in Canada, Australia and Europe. But secrecy in Britain is bolstered by a draconian Official Secrets Act, a nudge and wink 'D notice' system, and no less than 101 specific secrecy clauses in statutes affecting public authorities.

In recent years the courts have extended the veil of secrecy to cover disclosures of the dubious activities of private companies through extension of the doctrines of breach of confidence and breach of copyright.

The unreformed libel law can also work to censor public interest reporting. Reports of court cases are frequently postponed, and names suppressed, by 'gag' orders made under the 1981 Contempt of Court Act.

Public records, unavailable for an unnecessarily lengthy 30 years, are increasingly delayed for a century if their release would cause embarrassment by exposing uncomfortable government actions.

Moral censorship is back in vogue: home video-viewing is to be sanitised by a board of state appointees, and the Director of Public Prosecutions is currently using the Obscene Publications Act against distributors of books which provide information about illegal drugs. The ancient crimes of blasphemy, sedition and criminal libel still lurk in the shadows.

The legal constraints under which the British press labours need to be recognised

and reformed. There is no shortage of blueprints: official reports which have gathered dust over the last decade include Franks on Official Secrets, Faulks on Libel, Younger on Privacy, Whitford on Copyright, Wilson on Public Records, Williams on Obscenity, the Law Commission on Confidence, Blasphemy, Sedition and Criminal Libel, and the Report of the Third Royal Commission on the Press.

There is no other area of law in which reform is so demonstrably necessary and political resolve to produce it so utterly lacking. There is, instead, an obsession with 'regulating' and 'overseeing' the media, in the interests of good taste and good politics. Even the new technology of cable television is to have a statutory duty to transmit nothing which 'offends against good taste' or is 'offensive to public feeling'.

The other side of the coin, of course, is the public's right to know about the media, and to protest effectively about distortion, inaccuracy and lapses in ethical standards. Here the position is equally unsatisfactory. Many newspapers do not afford a person or organisation who has been criticised in their columns a reasonable right of reply, chequebook journalism flourishes unabated and there are unacceptable intrusions into private lives. The crime of blackmail has almost disappeared: the blackmailer can usually obtain more money from a Sunday newspaper than from his victim. Legislation is rarely a satisfactory way of regulating ethics, although the industry's own alternative, the Press Council, has proved incompetent and ineffectual.

It is ironical that so much of media law should restrict public interest reporting and so little of it work to eradicate discreditable press practices. The scales of justice balance badly, and there is no immediate prospect that they will be tipped in the right direction. □

Geoffrey Robertson is a lawyer and author of *People Against The Press*, *Quartet*, £7.95.

50 years on from the formation of The National Council for Civil Liberties the need to maintain and defend civil and political liberties is paramount.

As in 1934, with the State's hostility to the Hunger Marchers, the past four years have seen individual and collective liberties attacked and seriously eroded.

Not the least of the collective attacks is contained in the 1980 and 1982 laws against Trades Unions and the 1983 bill on internal democracy and unions' political rights.

In the year of 1984, above all years, a united campaign of resistance to authoritarianism must be at the top of the national agenda.

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Scottish Council for Civil Liberties

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041-332 5960

Welsh Campaign for Civil & Political Liberties

c/o 180 Bookshop, 100 Salisbury Road, Cathays, Cardiff. 0222-28908

National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux

110 Drury Lane, London WC2B 5SW.

01-836 9231

Law Centres Federation

164 North Gower Street, London NW1.

01-387 8570

Legal Action Group

28A Highgate Road, London NW5. 01-485 1189

Ombudsman,

Office of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration, Church House, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BY. 01-212 7676

Ombudsman - Local

21 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1.

01-222 5622

Citizen's Rights Office

1 Macklin Street, London WC2.

01-405 4517/5942

National Campaign Against the Police Bill

c/o 50 Rectory Road, London N16 7QY.

01-249 8334

Release

1 Elgin Avenue, London W9 3PR.

01-289 1123/603 8654

Justice

95A Chancery Lane, London WC2. 01-405 6018

Campaign for Freedom of Information

2 Northdown Street, London N1. 01-278 9686

Police Monitoring Groups

c/o GLC Police Committee Support Unit

Room 602, County Hall, London SE1 7PB.

01-633 5944.

PUBLISHING

Campaign for Press & Broadcasting Freedom

9 Poland Street, London W1. 01-437 2795

Right to Read 1984

c/o Knockabout Comics, 249 Kensal Road,

London W10. 01-969 2945

EMPLOYMENT

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Great Russell Street, London WC1. 01-636 4030

Youth Trainees' Union Rights Campaign

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Road, London SE17. 01-703 0833

BLACK PEOPLE

Black People's Information Centre

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01-969 4123/9825

Campaign for Racial Equality

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01-828 7022

IMMIGRANTS

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Strand, London WC2E 7EN. 01-240 5176

Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI)

44 Theobalds Road, London WC1. 01-405 5527

Cypriot Advisory Service

26 Crowndale Road, London NW1 1TT.

01-388 7971/2

Commission for Filipino Migrant Workers

St Francis of Assisi, Community Centre, Pottery

Lane, London W11. 01-221 0356

WOMEN

Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC)

1 Bedford Street, London WC2E 9HD.

01-379 6323

Rights of Women

374 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1. 01-278 6349

A Woman's Place

48 William IV Street, London WC2. 01-836 6081

Legal Action for Women

Kings Cross Women's Centre. 71 Tonbridge

Street, London WC1. 01-837 7509

Rape Crisis Centres NATIONWIDE

RCRP PO Box 69, London WC1X 9NJ.

01-837 1600

CHILDREN

Children's Legal Centre

20 Compton Terrace, London N1. 01-359 9392

Justice for Children

35 Wellington Street, London WC2. 01-836 5917

National Association for the Welfare of

Children in Hospital (NAWCH)

7 Exton Street, London SE1 8UE. 01-261 1738

National Association for Young People in Care

Salem House, 28a Manor Row, Bradford BD1

4QU. (0274) 728484/733134

National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty

to Children (NSPCC), 1 Riding House Street,

London W1P 8AA. 01-580 8812

Society of Teachers Opposed to Physical

Punishment (STOPP)

18 Victoria Park Square, London E2 9PB.

01-980 8523/791 0545

GAY PEOPLE

Campaign for Homosexual Equality

274 Upper Street, London N1. 01-359 3973

Gay Legal Advice

BM Glad, London WC1N 3XX. 01-821 7672

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MEDICAL CARE

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01-240 0671

Rights of People under Psychiatry (PROMPT)

323c Lordship Lane, East Dulwich, London

SE22. 01-693 0011 (3pm-10pm)

National Association for Mental Health

(MIND)

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01-637 0741

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Politics of fear

Is there any chance that, before it becomes too late, the main actors in the 'fateful triangle' – Israel, the Palestinians and the Americans – can be shaken from the prevailing suicidal/genocidal stupor to change the disastrous course of events? Each of these books deserves a careful reading because it throws light on today's question of questions. Maxime Rodinson, in a provocative group of essays ranging over 15 years, spells out precisely the terms necessary for any breakthrough. Arabs would have to accept 'the legitimacy of a specifically Jewish political structure, of an Israeli state', while Jews would have definitively and solemnly to declare 'the limits of the Zionist project' and 'acknowledge once and for all, in word and deed alike, that the Arabs of Palestine had primordial rights to this land, which they inhabited and cultivated'. How close to the path of mutual recognition are the protagonists today?

Perhaps understandably, those with least power over events, the Palestinians, have moved the furthest from rejectionism, as Helena Cobban traces in her insightful historical study focusing on the Fatah leadership and as Abdallah Frangi indicates in his surprisingly interesting and revealing (although often grossly distorted) semi-official history. Frangi, PLO representative in Bonn, indicates the evolution of Palestinian thinking until 'the partial state solu-

Cult, Ghetto and State

MAXIME RODINSON *Al Saqi Books* £17 & £5.95

The Palestinian Liberation Organization: People, Power and Politics

HELENA COBBAN *Cambridge* £22.50 & £6.95

The PLO and Palestine

ABDALLAH FRANGI *Zed Press* £16.95 & £5.95

The Fateful Triangle: The United States, Israel and the Palestinians

NOAM CHOMSKY *Pluto* £6.95

In the Land of Israel

AMOS OZ *Chatto* £7.95 *Flamingo* £2.95

tion" had been affirmed by all PLO organizations as a viable basis for the present phase of the Palestinian struggle' and the PLO had 'pinned its hopes on a political solution of the Palestine conflict'. Moreover, both books leave little doubt about the PLO's evolution into a government-in-exile, operating on dozens of levels – from schools to libraries to clinics to social welfare agencies to the more evident military, political and propaganda arms – until it has indeed become the self-organisation of the Palestinian people.

As with most national liberation movements, violence has been central to its self-creation. And it has little by little matured

'The prevailing suicidal/genocidal stupor' of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict has spread into Beirut, too.

politically and developed greater discipline and control over its violence. Thus it is both the organisation responsible for the deaths of over 280 Jews in terrorist attacks since 1967 (including the Jerusalem bus bombing last December as Arafat was preparing to evacuate Tripoli) and the negotiator and guarantor of PLO-Israeli cease-fires on the Lebanon border before the Israeli invasion of 1982.

The first reason given for adamant Israeli rejection of the PLO is its terrorism. Yet, as Chomsky demonstrates in chilling and startling detail, much of it from Israeli sources, Israeli Prime Ministers, two of them former terrorists, have ordered thousands of Palestinian non-combatants killed. And has not Shamir, former head of the Stern Gang, refused to negotiate with the PLO even if it renounces terrorism and recognises Israel? In fact, as Chomsky spells out at length, the Israeli invasion of Lebanon sought not to eliminate a security threat to Galilee but to destroy the complex and deeply-rooted Palestinian pre-state which, increasingly effective diplomatically, was becoming a political obstacle to transformation of the Occupied Territories. According to Amos Elon, the entire Israeli establishment was again and again led to 'panic' not by PLO violence but by the threat of peace! Will not a genuine peace entail Israeli abandonment of part of Eretz

Israel (and a project of transformation which has meant crippling the West Bank economy, massive expropriation of Palestinian land, creating conditions of life which encourage emigration, imprisonment and deportation of much of the Palestinian leadership, and the destruction of any meaningful educational process)? Israeli rejectionism seeks to destroy in the PLO the one force which by its very essence stands morally and politically against this project.

But even Israelis willing to consider trading the Occupied Territories for peace, such as Amos Oz, show reason to reject the PLO: fear, not of terrorism or a West Bank-Gaza mini-state, but deeper, more general, recurring again and again in his interview with staff members of *El Fajr* in East Jerusalem. He worries about alleged PLO ownership of the newspaper and its ultimate backing by 'the resources of the Soviet alliance, the masses of the third world'; whether the Palestinians have 'finished with' Jaffa, 'forgotten Ramla and Acre' and concede Israeli right to these places; whether the PLO can be trusted to defer indefinitely their dream of a 'unified, non-sectarian state' renounced 'only after decades of savage attempts to throw Israel into the sea, in blood and fire'.

The basis for Oz's fear, inherent in Zionism since at least the creation of the state, is explained by Chomsky's quote from Meron Benvenisti, former deputy mayor of Jerusalem. 'We cannot stand a symmetry of claims. Israelis have a profound feeling that once they accept the symmetry that the other side is also a legitimate national movement then their own feeling about their own right and legitimacy will be dimmed.'

For all Israel's evident power, fear motivates much Jewish support for brutal attacks against 'terrorists' in Lebanon and oppressive policies in the Occupied Territories. Does not the PLO, through Frangi, speak of a mini-state as the goal only of the 'present phase' of the struggle, one to be continued . . . until when? Will not the 'peaceful and political' campaign for a 'secular, democratic state' be only today's strategy of a weak PLO and a weak Arab world?

To be sure, Oz's great failing is his unreflective and even carefully cultivated nationalism, in a time when, in power, its dangerous trend should be so obvious. His widely celebrated account of Israelis today is undermined by a need to see his proto-fascist interlocutors lovingly as part of the same 'family' rather than as political enemies, and by his consequent lack of criticism of their common premises; by the alarming intellectual and moral thinness of his moderate vision in the face of Right-wing and religious insanity.

But these very limitations reflect dimensions of Israel and Jewish life today which great universalist Jewish analysts like Chomsky and Rodinson ignore at their peril. *Cult, Ghetto and State* is animated by the admirable determination to demythologise both anti-Semitism and Jewish survival by showing both as the determinate results of determinate historical processes. Rodinson argues that Judaism was 'on the road to complete liquidation' before Hitler, and has since been 'preserved by anti-Semitism and

by modern political Zionism, which was a consequence of it'. Yet Rodinson is unwilling to absorb into his analysis the profound trauma making rejectionism plausible, indeed he rejects the term 'Holocaust' itself as 'theological'. A 'citizen of Jewish origin in French society', he seems to relegate everything specifically Jewish today to the past or the 'inconsistent and pernicious' nationalism which is Zionism — as if after Auschwitz Jews could be expected voluntarily to disappear as Jews. On the contrary, the Holocaust is a fundamental collective experience demanding of Jews of every orientation that they respond *as Jews*. Rejecting this terrain, Rodinson deprives of his acute intellect those Jews who are trying to demythologise it and to free Israeli-Diaspora politics from their rampant hysteria.

Tackling this very task, Chomsky has two purposes: to chronicle the actual facts of American-supported Israeli policies towards the Palestinians, and to attack the consensus which distorts, denies and justifies the shocking reality. The widespread conviction of Israel's essential rightness *no matter what* is enforced and propagated with a zeal, organisational capacity and sheer mendacity reminiscent of Communist apologetics of the 1930s. As Chomsky himself demonstrates, the distorting consensus is plainly not susceptible to refutation, yet he piles horrible fact upon horrible fact, argument upon argument until the text fairly staggers under its own bibliographic weight, sarcasm and sheer volume of detail, approaching at times a rationalist mirror-image of the hysteria he combats. At Chomsky's level of sophistication, the point surely is not to conquer unreason, but to explore *why* such evils can be defended with such moral conviction. At the heart of the consensus, after all, are the nationalist conclusions most Jews have drawn from this century of disaster, their placing of Israel at the centre of Jewishness today and their deep-seated fear for its survival — none of which is absurd, all of which must be addressed by anyone seeking to understand Israeli actions.

Certainly, as Chomsky indicates, the situation is bad today: Israeli-American policy remains firmly rejectionist. Oz leaves us feeling that the Right is the centre of political and moral gravity in Israel today, even if he also reminds us that the opposition continues struggling to find an authentic voice. Cobban forecasts the inevitable split in the PLO, but also describes the future terrain of struggle as the Occupied Territories themselves. And Frangi, in the strongest note of hope, insists on the persistence and vitality of Palestinian identity.

Whatever may be the underlying Jewish fears, the fear of expulsion is very much on the minds of the two million Palestinians under Israeli rule today. As the unravelling of the invasion of Lebanon shows, the real working out of events is being determined at a more basic level than the planning-rooms in Washington and Jerusalem. It will depend on the struggles of the Palestinians and the anti-annexationist Israelis — and on their humanity as well. Will they one day be allowed to recognise each other's fears, and see in them the mirror of their own? □

AUTOBIOGRAPHY Godfrey Hodgson

Two Koestlers

Stranger on the Square

ARTHUR and CYNTHIA KOESTLER
ed. HAROLD HARRIS *Hutchinson* £9.95

Almost a year ago, Arthur and Cynthia Koestler were found dead together in their house in Montpelier Square in Knightsbridge. He had an empty glass of brandy in his hand, she an empty glass of whisky. Both had taken massive overdoses.

Koestler was 77 and had been suffering not only from Parkinson's disease but also from leukaemia which had reached the terminal stage. His wife was 55 and in perfect health. He left a suicide note, written more than six months earlier. She typed a brief addition shortly before they died. 'I should have liked to finish my account of working for Arthur,' she wrote. 'However, I cannot live without Arthur, despite certain inner resources.'

Arthur Koestler published, before he was 50, two of the most fascinating volumes of autobiography of the 20th century, *Arrow in the Blue* and *The Invisible Writing*. For more than a quarter of a century after that friends and publishers repeatedly implored him to add a third volume. He consistently refused — until he embarked on this joint autobiography with his wife.

There is little that is new in those chapters he contributed, except for flashes. Literary historians will be glad of his account of his friendship, if that is the right word, with Sartre, Camus and Simone de Beauvoir, already celebrated in *The Mandarins*, where Koestler appears as Scriassine. Political historians may be less glad of his account of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, which is less than frank, to put it mildly.

By far the best thing by *him* in the book is about *her*: his description of how she came for an interview for a job as his secretary as a painfully shy South African girl of 22.

Perhaps in this project his intelligence won over his well-documented selfishness, and he meant it to be what it is: her book. It has to be said it is not the kind of woman's life that is likely to be passed on by feminist mothers as a model for their daughters. For the appalling truth is that for 33 years Cynthia Jefferies devoted herself to Arthur Koestler. And in so far as it is possible to call anyone happy, even after they are dead, the evidence suggests that she was.

It comes across in the gentle nostalgia with which she remembers the days she spent on his sailing canoe when she was almost too insignificant for him to notice, and in the muted triumph with which she describes another holiday in the canoe, seven years later, at last accepted as his mistress.

It was not easy. He was the literary lion of the age. He was living on the edge of the Seine with the woman who was later his second wife, Mamaine Paget, one of identical twins pursued by virtually all readers of the *New Statesman* for their beauty and intellectuality. She was a little South African secretary whose mother had told her always to protect her face from the sun. He had written five novels, owned three houses, had no equal as a seducer of rich and smart and clever women. He was also rich, combative and *difficile*.

It is apparent that she fell in love with him from the start. She is characteristically discreet about when they became lovers. She had a few rather woeful-sounding affairs, and was briefly married. Whenever she could she came back to him, and had to watch his affairs from close up.

Like Jacob in the *Old Testament*, she served seven years in the house of Laban for the man she loved, and even then her troubles were not over. She laughed out loud when she heard he had become the father of an illegitimate daughter, because it was impossible to think of him as a father.

She was expected to devote herself entirely to him, and she did. To preserve him from the competition of children of his own she underwent two abortions, which she describes in a matter-of-fact way that conceals neither the physical nor the emotional pain. She records without comment what he wrote in his diary when she left to get married – long before she was accepted as the official mistress, let alone wife.

Cynthia left on July 30 – got unexpectedly terribly depressed at losing her. Partly because really exceptionally sweet, cheerful, naive, pretty, devoted; and also because it is a breaking off of another bit of my life.

It is clear that she loved him without reservations and without illusions, and that she meant just what she said when she wrote that she did not want to live without him.

Her story prompts another less cosy thought, however. When Koestler finally settled down with Cynthia – and the banal phrase is for once exactly right – something changed. He became, no doubt, a happier man, a kinder friend. He also lost the lion's paw as a writer.

There are different opinions about the work he did in the last 20 years of his life. There are some who dismiss it as virtually worthless 'parascience'. My own view is that it is more interesting than that: the varied output of a man who had always been divided between the two obsessions he describes in an illuminating passage in *Arrow in the Blue*, with tortured humanity and with the indifferent infinity of the universe. It is possible to argue that the last phase of Koestler's life was not a retreat from politics so much as a reversion, to the other task that had always preoccupied him: understanding the universe.

On either interpretation, it is plain enough that his creative powers as a writer did decline perceptibly from about the time when he became, with Cynthia, and for the first time, tranquilly and safely happy.

But which was cause? Which effect? It is

too naive to say that creativity must be the child of anguish. Yet the story of the two Arthur Koestlers – the wild, tormented man Cynthia Jefferies fell in love with, and the man of letters at Montpelier Square – inescapably suggests some connection between the end of angst and the ebbing of talent. □

BIOGRAPHY

Peter Wilsher

Playing with fire

Rutherford: Simple Genius

DAVID WILSON Hodder £14.95

Late in 1917, Sir Ernest Rutherford, Nobel prizewinner, professor of physics, head of Cambridge University's Cavendish Laboratory, and already long recognised as the most ingenious and gifted experimental scientist of his generation, was regrettably delayed on his way to an important meeting of the inter-allied anti-submarine warfare committee of which he was a leading and forceful member. In his letter of apology he explained to his eminent and no doubt irate colleagues that he had been caught up in certain empirical investigations which he thought might throw light on, among other things, the ultimate structure of matter. 'If, as I have reason to believe,' he told them, 'I have disintegrated the nucleus of the atom, this is of greater significance than the war.'

Rutherford, as this long, careful biography by the BBC's science correspondent amply shows, practised science on an heroic scale. For a couple of generations – between 1895, when he arrived in Britain as a raw young New Zealander with a £150-a-year colonial scholarship and a bundle of wires he had put together which could already send radio signals further than Marconi, and 1937, when he died – he set the standards for practical working at the frontiers of knowledge. With his loud, booming laugh, his skill at extracting fundamental discoveries from the most primitive and leaky apparatus and his voracious hunger for 'results', he knew everyone that mattered in his chosen field – Cockcroft, Chadwick, Einstein, the Curies, Bohr, Hahn, Planck – and taught many of them the necessary disciplines of their investigatory trade.

When he was born, one of 12 children, on a remote South Island sheep station, the atom, if anyone had ever heard of it, was still regarded as a comfortably indestructible building block for an assured and reasonably comprehensible universe. When he departed, with his peerage, his presidency of the Royal Society, his endless string of fully deserved honours and his basic belief that 'God created the world in such a way that everything simple is true and everything complicated is untrue', he left us shivering survivors to grapple only with the rigours of the Uncertainty Principle and the threat of Mutually Assured Destruction.

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He himself, though, was clearly innocent of all but the vaguest foreknowledge of what was to come. Every now and then, in his papers or in an account of a laboratory visit, there is a joke or a reference to show that such possibilities were talked about — like the letter from a Cavendish friend, as early as 1905, which mentions ‘your playful suggestion that, could a proper detonator be found, it is just conceivable that a wave of atomic disintegration could be started in matter which would indeed make this old world vanish in smoke’. But Rutherford, to the end, never really believed it. He knew it could be done, of course. In 1917, when he missed his admiralty meeting, he had fired alpha-particles into a cloud of nitrogen and ejected a molecule of hydrogen, thus achieving the alchemist’s dream of transmutation of elements. And in 1932, the ‘annus mirabilis’ of modern physics, he had presided while Cockcroft and Walton, with their million-volt accelerator built of ‘plastercine, biscuit tins and, I suspect, sugar crates’ showed in a series of historic bombardments that it was possible to smash atoms — including uranium — at will. But he was still crucially convinced that this could be achieved only on a minute scale. The forces and energies involved were so great that nuclear-fission must be the rarest of events — ‘like trying to shoot a gnat in the Albert Hall, and firing 10 million bullets to do it’. He was safe in his grave when the discovery of the chain reaction finally put every gnat in the world at risk.

In fact everyone’s blithe confidence that the toys they were playing with were essentially safe is one of the most striking motifs running through the book. The enthusiasts in their white coats actually called themselves ‘the radioactivists’ but they had no idea of the health hazards involved. Certainly there were rules about the handling of radium, which was the main tool of their research, but that was because the stuff was extremely scarce and produced ‘emanations’ which contaminated the measuring instruments, not because it was thought capable of doing irreparable damage to the human frame. So they carried tubes of it around in their overall pockets, sent samples to each other by passenger train (recovering them with ‘an exchange of postcards’ when they went missing) and could not understand why Pierre Curie’s hands looked so raw and inflamed when he held up a bottle to show them the beautiful luminescent glow one night in his garden.

As far as can be ascertained Rutherford, whose first reference to uranium in his notes dates back to 1897, never suffered a day’s harm, despite a long life of almost uninterrupted exposure to assorted radiation. But he did rather tetchily regret, in his last years, that his old laboratory assistant, Crowe, seemed to be losing his dexterity — possibly because he had to wear gloves to cover the lesions that would not clear up on his once-nimble fingers. In 1937, one suspects, he would not even have been considered for industrial injury compensation. But then, as Rutherford once said in praise of his chosen field of research: ‘No subject has been so fruitful in surprises.’ □

FEMINISM

Barbara Taylor

Wanting

Female Desire: Women’s Sexuality Today
ROSALIND COWARD *Paladin* £2.95

What do women want? If we don’t know by now, it’s not for lack of being told. Our desires — and their appropriate, reasonably priced objects — are heralded to us across billboards; displayed in shop windows; depicted on magazine covers; spelled out in an endless flow of verbiage from agony aunts, novelists, song-writers, sales promoters. Women’s most intimate needs are visible, audible everywhere — or so it would seem. Or is it that what we see and hear is in fact the stuff of which ‘Woman’, the avaricious, needy target of all these instructive discourses, is made? Who is it who wears the clothes ‘designed’ for her, shares the prob-

lems ascribed to her, lusts after the food/lighting arrangements/men assigned to her — seeks herself everywhere in the gaze and voice of those who know what she wants? Whose desires constitute ‘female desire’?

Rosalind Coward now turns our gaze toward these questions, in a book which is fun, funny, wise and very thought-provoking. I suspect it may well be a bestseller — not only because it deserves to be (here I must declare an interest, having predicted this possibility after seeking bits of the book in draft) but also for reasons which Coward’s own sense of irony will allow her to appreciate: that despite the continual discursive barrage to which we are subjected, we are all still (women and men alike) in search of some answers to the question of desire. But this book is not another such ‘answer’, and what it offers its readers are not more authoritative representations of our needs but the much trickier, scratchier pleasures of seeing one’s own intimate wants delicately dissected in the representations, symbols, fantasies which it describes. Its 24 little essays take us across women’s relationship to their bodies, homes, clothing, food, memories, lovers — all as sites for the cultural encoding of our aspirations, particularly our sexual aspirations. Like all such wide-

Jeremy Reed

Surfers

Couched in a recess from the wind I’ve seen
ravens fly back and forth to this cliff-ledge,
and watched the sea returning, and its sheen

turn bluebottle-blue flecked with indigo,
as though ink dropped into an abalone
accounted for that darkening. The flow

is rapid, and surf blazes across flats
burnished a hard gold by the wind, ribbed sand
planed level as a sheet of glass. In hats

and beach shorts, the surfing crowd congregate
beneath the sea wall, and out of the wind,
absorb the sun’s fierce energies, the slate-

like textures of their bodies oiled to bare
both sea and sun. Up here I watch those birds
drop down through a blue crystal of sea air

and comb beached drifts of wrack dried by the heat
to fossil strands where flies fester. Each wave
asserts a resonance — a drumming beat

communicated to the group who tan,
awaiting a heavier lift of surf
to call them to their boards. I watch a man

squat down, his pulse picking up the rhythm
of each new smoking wall of surf that gains
momentum, shot through with light by the sun

to subside with a mulling poker’s hiss.
He’s like a sentry in his black peaked cap,
maintaining vigil, and at his raised fist

the word is out, and down the beach they race
these tiny figures running with their boards
into the wind and the blue rim of space.

ranging collections of essays, it is uneven; but overall the result is a disturbing, subversive text — a feminist *Mythologies* (Coward's debt to Barthes is obvious) with the same combination of political, polemical and theoretical intent as that great book.

Coward's own theoretical instruments are semiology, psychoanalysis, gender and class analysis — but she wields them with the lightness of touch appropriate for a book aimed at a popular audience. Take for example 'Sweetheart', an examination of food metaphors as terms of endearment. Honey, sweetiepie, sugarplum, apple of my eye — all innocent enough, surely? Well . . . 'Do we detect a note of cannibalism here?' Coward asks, and goes on to suggest that in the predominantly 'masculine/maternal' use of such language (male lovers to their partners/women to children) we find a meshing of nourishment and sexual gratification in which 'there is a measure of sadism lurking beneath the surface . . . a language of devouring, gobbling up . . .' And in the sugar-based endearments through which women in particular are designated as objects of desire she hears connotations of decadent possession, voluptuous eating, 'a sweet-toothed western sexuality' in which women are the icing on a libidinal cake.

Nourishment, possession, inessential luxuries. With a startling precision, our language makes links between the attitudes which place women under the domination of man in our society.

Popular music on radio as a medium of sexual consolation; ideal-home journalism as a sort of public confessional ('after all, if you had seen the puce-coloured bedroom of Terry Wogan, would there be anything more to know?'); the Royal Family as the 'Dallas' of the British press — is nothing sacred? Apparently not; yet Coward is far from harshly satirical in her analysis of these popular mythologies. 'The pleasures I describe are often my pleasures,' the introduction explains.

But nor will I treat these pleasures as sacrosanct. Good girls enjoy what they're given but what they're given may not always be good for them.

Too true, but they are gifts difficult to refuse until we find some alternatives. Coward knows this very well, so she eschews the stance of the moralist for that of the listener, with an ear finely tuned not only to cultural resonances but also to dissonances, contradictions, the 'precariousness of the representations'. For if women are not yet entirely sure what we want, we're pretty sure we're not getting what we need — and that conviction is making itself felt in cultural cross-currents running against the tide of dominant ideology. We've got a few new hunches of our own about female desire — and they aren't up on the billboards yet either. And it is these subversive possibilities which, in the end, Coward hopes to expose and encourage: the pleasures, in her words, 'which escape, slip between the cracks, and perhaps spell the ruin of existing definitions of female desire'. □

New Statesman 24 February 1984

FICTION Harriett Gilbert

Over and over

The Anatomy Lesson

PHILIP ROTH *Cape* £8.95

Cathedral

RAYMOND CARVER *Collins* £8.95

Album

SARAH MCCOY *Calder* £3.50

The Open Road

JENNIFER GUBB *Onlywomen* £1.99

First he writes about wanking, now he wanks about writing: Philip Roth is nothing if not tenacious. *The Anatomy Lesson*, the third novel in his Nathan Zuckerman trilogy, is rarely less than urbane, intelligent and witty. It also has several nice insights, some painful flashes of emotional truth and, towards the very end, a virtuoso outburst. But the whole is reduced, restricted, by its hero's compulsive emotional self-abuse.

Zuckerman's problem, this time, isn't fame but writer's block. Not just any old writer's block, but one which has manifested itself as a crippling, undiagnosable pain 'in his neck, arms, and shoulders'. He seeks relief with his visiting harem (though prone and clamped in an orthopaedic collar, he is still apparently capable of satisfying four women — heaven forbid that we should suspect his impotence of being sexual) and with a motley of quacks and shrinks, none of whom rids him of anything but his dollars. Unable to find a cure in the present, Zuckerman returns to his much trampled past: his father's bitter, death-bed curse; his own rejection by family and race for the scabrous contents of his best-selling novel *Carnovsky*.

Both of the earlier Zuckerman novels thrashed around in this mud. *The Anatomy Lesson* gets no closer to escape — even adds to the suction by introducing a Jewish literary critic, Appel, as a surrogate father. What it does produce is one profoundly moving description of loss, as Zuckerman remembers wandering about his dead mother's Florida apartment, spending the night in his mother's bed and waking to find that not even her ghost is there beside him any more. Deciding finally to free himself from the guilt-inducing responsibilities of authorship, Zuckerman flies to Chicago to enrol in medical school. This section of Roth's novel — in which both authors confront the fear that they *may* be nothing but pornographers — catches fire with a fine, articulate rage. Between its howls, a bigger, less obsessively circling novel can be glimpsed. It would be very good to read it.

Raymond Carver's stories are far from obsessive. In those collected in *Cathedral*, the overwhelming sensation is of riding a switchback, of changing direction so often that none has any more importance than

another. Indeed, the stories question the very notion of emotional priorities. 'The Train' (dedicated to John Cheever, a story teller whose elegant shiftings of perception Carver can match) begins as follows:

The woman was called Miss Dent, and earlier that evening she'd held a gun on a man. She'd made him get down in the dirt and plead for his life. While the man's eyes welled with tears and his fingers picked at leaves, she pointed the revolver at him and told him things about himself.

Not only do we never discover what led up to this event (there's quite enough there, in any case, for us to work it out), but both Miss Dent's attention and ours become quite naturally absorbed in the problem of why, on the platform where she waits for her train, the old man who joins her with his woman friend should be wearing a white silk cravat, but no shoes.

Carver's stories are frequently about drinking, or drying out. Here, the distracted snippets of prose, the lightning changes of concentration, are especially effective. Our loss of opportunity for emotional involvement with the characters is compensated for by the fine precision not only of Carver's writing but of his perception of the ways in which people behave.

Sarah McCoy doesn't give a damn for behaviour. If Carver's work slots neatly into the careful, refined and laconic mode of contemporary American story writing, McCoy's belongs to a more elaborate, experimental, Continental tradition. It is no surprise that her stories, although originally written in English, appeared in Belgian and French magazines before being published either here or in her native Australia. Those in *Album* push aside 'surface' to plunge through memory, dreams, fears — frequently failing to stop until they have reached the sea bed of childhood. It is these that are the most successful. Written in a delirious prose in which punctuation and capital letters obey some new set of laws, they are still astonishingly lucid — creating a world of paranoid secrecy, flayed senses, stripped nerves and a vulture imagination that swoops on every scrap left lying about by the careless, adult 'they'. Blood streams rather too frequently from mouths and eyes, but (when they stay on their side of Gothic) these stories are shockingly powerful.

Don't be put off by the first story in Jennifer Gubb's *The Open Road* — it is atypically clumsy and banal. The others (again, especially when dealing with childhood) possess that kind of raw-knuckled, unsentimental sensuality that the country has for those who live not only in, but off it. Along with the constant struggle against poverty and land, there is a war of the sexes being waged — brutal in its directness (as when a farmer uses the threat of 'his massive boots . . . his arms like brick red clubs hanging ready at his sides' to force his 13-year-old daughter to kill a chicken for the family supper), yet clear, at least; unambiguous. Gubb's writing, neither bitter nor romantic, conveying the rich-rough texture of a life without recourse to 'set piece' descriptions, has those same kind of qualities. □

The Closing Chapter

LORD DENNING *Butterworth* £10.50 & £6.50

This promises to be the last of Lord Denning's autobiographical quartet, and may come as a merciful relief to his many critics and opponents. The establishment criticism of the last Master of the Rolls relates to his disruptive, even anarchic effect on the doctrine of precedent and to his blurring of the separation of functions between Parliament and the judiciary. His most outspoken opponents regard him as an illiberal and bigoted windbag; on this view he is seen as a man who should never in a rational society have been allowed to wield such great power and influence. But not all of his critics are opponents. To some he was the greatest judge of modern times. Greatest, of course, is not always best. It is probably a little early to make a properly considered assessment of his importance.

The first third of the latest book deals with his last months as Master of the Rolls and with the ignominious circumstances of his retirement. A good deal of this section is total nonsense calculated to please only the most rabid undergraduate Denning lover. Most of it would pass as an extended prose poem by E. J. Thribb. No one at the end of a long and illustrious career should be begrudged a little self indulgence; and no reader with any experience of Denning will be surprised to see this hokum.

We are led to expect a treatment of the scandal surrounding the retirement which is disarming and touching in its candour. Yet Denning casts himself as *victim* of the outcry which greeted his attack on the black jurors in the Bristol riot trial. He considers himself guilty only of making a miscalculation, a 'mistake of fact'. 'It was being interpreted as if I was actuated by racial prejudice.' He gives no indication of having really understood the issues.

The remainder of the book deals with legal preoccupations and he devotes a considerable amount of space to trade union law. This section is littered with union-bashing remarks interspersed with references to his proud independence as a judge and to the invariably apolitical nature of his judgments. This is without a doubt the most entertaining part of the book; here, as everywhere else, he protests too much.

Mark Benney

Betrayers of the Truth: Fraud and Deceit in the Halls of Science

WILLIAM BROAD and NICHOLAS WADE
Century £8.95

Scientists lie, cheat and steal. In this they are no different from the rest of mankind. Yet a myth exists that, while they exhibit these normal human failings outside the laboratory, once inside this *sanctum sanctorum* they exhibit a purity of thought and deed worthy of any saint. Admittedly, this is only partly attributed to the natural goodness of the scientists, and lays much of the responsibility at the door of science's informal, but nonetheless rigorous and formidable system of self-control. This system allocates recognition to the scientist in exchange only for original work *capable of replication*.

Betrayers of the Truth catalogues the numerous cases of fraud and deceit by scientists, showing that many of our 'heroes of science' were flawed in their practice: Galileo cheated, Newton lied, Darwin stole. More importantly the authors claim that these blemishes in the production process of science are not isolated and exceptional events, but rather the needle peaks of a widespread phenomenon.

Some of these deceptions can go undetected for decades, and can distort political and technical choices. One example of this is Cyril Burt's work on 'heredity' that was so vital in shaping Britain's postwar education system into the rigid and hierarchical trinity of Grammar, Technical and Secondary Modern schools. It was not until 1976 that the *Sunday Times* – not the scientific press – exposed Burt's half-century of scientific work as a fabrication.

The implication of this and similar events is that the healthy scepticism that politicians so often suspend in the face of science's claims to be able to arbitrate between political choices must be maintained. Broad and Wade have shown science's other side. To mirror the 'heroes of science' of the past perhaps we should have the trio of Margaret Howard, Elias A. K. Alsabti and Jocelyn Bell. The first was one of Burt's ghostly collaborators, the second published scores – if not hundreds – of forged scientific papers, while the third was the graduate student who discovered in the Sixties the novel pulsating radio stars known as 'pulsars' and whose reward was to see her discovery earn not her, but her supervisor, Dr Antony Hewish, the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1974. We should remember them.

Glyn Ford

An Indian Journal

NICHOLAS GARLAND
Salamander Press £8.50

A middle-aged cartoonist from the *Daily Telegraph* spends a month in India, all expenses paid. His journal with some drawings is published, a foreword by William Deedes attached. Wouldn't you expect to hate such a book? But, in fact, *An Indian Journal* is a lovely book, a book to dream over.

Mr Garland's is an uncluttered artist's eye. Passing a narrow street in Delhi he looks down a vista of filthy puddles and sees two men squatting in a hole in the wall, one cooking and the other talking quietly. He is struck not by their poverty but by the ease and comfort of their relation. In the Red Fort he feels as if transported into an illustration in a children's book. He remarks on the solidity of the decaying buildings in Calcutta 'as if there was a hell of a lot more decay where that came from'. He describes a country ritual with candles and rice and coloured powders with as careful attention as he looks at the Taj Mahal. Unfortunately the drawings in the book do not match the freshness of his perceptions: his cartoonist's style is too uniform for the varied scenes it attempts.

The meat of the book – the grappling of a sensibility culturally akin to the reader's own with the octopus vitality of India – is satisfyingly rich in detail. The charm of the writing, however, lies in its – or the writer's – simplicity. It is slightly clumsy, amateur really, bouncing from introspection to conversation and back to the loneliness of a hotel room without any straining for appropriate style. So it readily encompasses those interesting rough edges and interruptions of experience which the expertise of the drawings glosses over.

Nothing happens as planned in India, but that may be all to the good, as Mr Garland slowly discovers. Failing to arrange a hotel room he ends up staying with a newspaper editor and meeting the intelligentsia of New Delhi. Panicking at the task of buying a train ticket he makes friends and gets reservations by drawing his situation. He stops in the country and is invited to go on an illegal tiger hunt but refuses, only to spend a sleepless night 'furious at being so pathetic'. A barely competent traveller, he is interested in

everyone he meets and able to convey their interest. Across the page the faces of India flicker and in the background Nick Garland, agog at his own daring, enjoys himself like billy-oh, but misses his wife and children.

Victoria Neumark

The Tidy House: Little Girls Writing

CAROLYN STEEDMAN *Virago* £9.95 & £5.95

What three eight-year-old girls accomplished in four days of creative partnership in July 1976 is presented here in print and in facsimile, along with transcriptions of their conversation. The story is not intrinsically remarkable or, at first glance, revelatory. Carla, Melissa and Lindie were growing up on a run-down interwar housing estate, and this is the sort of neighbourhood in which their characters, Jo and Mark, Jamie and Jason, settle down. After honeymoon scenes, doctors are consulted and babies born: a mixed blessing as we see from the ensuing tears, tantrums, smackings and disagreements.

Carolyn Steedman argues persuasively that, in chronicling their imaginary families, the writers gained a symbolic mastery over a troubled present and disheartening prospects. The importance of this extends beyond the benefit to the individuals concerned, since we know so little, at first hand, of the formative experiences of working-class girls. There exists no recognised body of evidence on unprivileged female childhood. Steedman considers what we have instead: the marginalia of social history and a few footnotes to a masculinist science of human development. In the mid-19th century, a female preoccupation with money, cleaning and child-care, akin to that of Carla, Melissa and Lindie, is found among the juvenile street-traders and sweepers interviewed by Henry Mayhew. There is a more copious archive of diaries produced in the past by little girls (often as a spiritual exercise), but these belonged to the bourgeois nursery.

The relegation of ordinary girls to the periphery of pedagogic attention might have been expected to diminish with the advent of universal free education. Not so. Carolyn Steedman shows how, in our own day, reductive notions of intellectual endowment, whereby educational potential is doled out roughly in accordance with social status, have been coercively implemented, and accepted as 'common sense', thus persuading working-class parents to abandon dreams of seeing their geese turn into swans. Teachers can't work miracles, and indeed most primary-school staff are well fitted, by reason of poor salaries, low self-esteem and female gender, to preach and practise the doctrines of humility.

Ironically, as Infants and Juniors, girls excel. They adapt well to institutional order and learn to read and write faster than boys. Yet the advantage of a head-start apparently disappears at puberty.

Primary schools are inscrutable places and Carolyn Steedman who has taught in them for eight years despairs of describing what goes on there: the 'white heat' of lessons, the 'daily comedy' which is also 'life's tragedy'. In fact, the atmosphere of the institution that begot *The Tidy House* is poignantly conveyed here. But it is surely true that a generally uninformed public opinion omits primary education from most discussion. Partly to blame for this is the unbridgeable gulf, in the profession, between lowly doers at the chalk-face and lofty thinkers in university departments, some of whom have shown by perfunctory reviews of this book that original ideas born of classroom contact are beyond their grasp.

Marion Glastonbury

FILMS
John Coleman

Up the Pole



Anne Bancroft and Mel Brooks: 'adroit musical' or 'bad-taste comedy'?

To Be or Not to Be (PG)
*Odeons, Haymarket, Kensington
and Swiss Cottage*

Almonds and Raisins (U)
Phoenix

The Big Chill (15)
*Screen on the Green; Classic, Oxford Street;
Cinecenta; Odeon, Kensington*
Rumble Fish (18)
Lumiere

Mel Brooks is one of the funniest men around. And around. And around. When he appeared in front of the curtains, after a press lunch and immediately before the screening of his latest movie to us reviewers and a lot of other afternoon people, there was a faint sense of amazement that he had legs: one had got so used to his talking head delivered box-size. Full-size Mr Brooks didn't let the occasion slip, though, addressing us as 'Ladies and Germans' (maybe the post-luncheon slurring of 'gentlemen' registered a naughtiness only I heard) and ending on a genial smack in the face of our expectations: 'If you have any questions, don't bother me with them.' As the gratified rattle of mildly masochistic applause died down, one had just time to reflect that Mr Brooks had co-written, directed and starred in a little number — a Hitchcockian spoof — called *High Anxiety*.

In the event, which is a re-make of the 1942 Lubitsch classic where Jack Benny's pale, lunar, incontrovertible deadpan — a facial landscape available to snail-slow adjustments into recognition of bad news — was matched by Carole Lombard's quick-

silver shifts from glamorous smiles to beautiful barbs, the new **To Be or Not to Be** is open to a couple of bothersome questions while being very good entertainment. The Lubitsch was ill fated. It was shown soon after Lombard's death in an air crash; and its plot — set among a troupe of thespians in Nazi-invaded Warsaw — was doomed to make waves. Bad taste was only one of the charges levelled against the script of Melchior Lengyel (who had inspired *Ninotchka*) and the whole, extraordinary, terrifyingly innocent show. Andrew Sarris, much later, came up with a defence I find satisfying: '... widely criticised as an inappropriately farcical treatment of Nazi terror, [it] bridges the abyss between laughter and horror. For Lubitsch it was sufficient to say that Hitler had bad manners, and no evil was then inconceivable'. Bad manners, one notes. And Mr Brooks has been pretty widely canvassed as the fellow who doesn't give an audible hoot about manners. Any lip-service he pays to old moral modes will have its snarling edge, its curl towards the unmentionable. It must be — after *Blazing Saddles* and such — a hard, professionally disreputable reputation to live down to.

And so it is nice — after all the ballyhoo — to come to praise his version of *To Be or Not to Be*, which is less good than the original, but not to be missed, in that it displays a rough fidelity to the Lubitsch caper of actors, marital stress, cowardly egos stretched to encompass impersonations of Hitler, the downfall of a Gestapo commandant and the rescue of a parcel of Jewish refugees. The key moment in both films comes, of course, when Bronski (Mel

Brooks) has to watch a handsome officer vacate his seat while the Bronski-character — Tura in the Lubitsch, but Br... something here — is unleashing his *Hamlet* soliloquy. The handsome lieutenant is making for the dressing-room where, caressive on a couch, swathed in white fur, vamps Mrs Bronski — an opportunity that the wife of Mr Brooks, superb Anne Bancroft, embraces with full, droll resourcefulness. She, whether required to open the revels with a Polish-language version of 'Sweet Georgia Brown' — a song-and-dance number with hubby that calls down an American voice-over dictating from now on English will be spoken — or lending herself to the beguilement of assorted Nazis (among whom Charles Durning outstands as a bumbling, besotted, inadequate German colonel), was probably the *primum mobile* of this venture, anyway. Brooks even handed over the direction, for once, to Alan Johnson, his erstwhile choreographer — of such items as 'Springtime with Hitler' and that musicked torture-sequence from *History of the World — Part I*, which offered sequel pleasures like 'Hitler on Ice' and 'Jews in Space'.

This last boast is amply fulfilled. More spaced-out Jews in an historical minefield you could hardly expect. Time passes, after all — after all our unbending exposure to the extremities of the Holocaust. Brooks, as a paid-up Jew, is entitled to his own comical blitzkrieg. And if, like Chaplin, he plays Hitler in this a thought disquietingly, he has an answer to most knee-jerk Gentile objections. He's tough, a pro, a New-York-style one-liner, as if you had to be quick with the repartee before a midnight seizing took you to the camps, annihilation. It's not his experience, but it is the experience of his people. So when he has gags like 'without Jews, fags and gypsies, there is no theatre', and a lurching instant or so associated with a homosexual dresser (who moans, '... pink triangles ... I hate it ... It clashes with everything'), his mastery of the double-take — very fast with him, slow with the Forties-paced Jack Benny — sees him through our squeamishness. For heaven's sake, this is essentially an adroit musical with sharpened dialogue; or a humorous vehicle with a few awkward passengers and a street-wise driver, born to short cuts; or a Mel Brooks bad-taste comedy delightfully featuring his wife. It also has tremendous supporting performances.

Treated by Wolf Mankowitz (whose theatrically touching 1956 *The Bespoke Overcoat*, with Alfie Bass and David Kossof in sterling form, shares the bill), Russ Karel's **Almonds and Raisins** is a documentary dealing in a fascinatingly naive pre-Brooks form of Jewish cinema: the 300-odd Yiddish films made between *The Jazz Singer* and the US entry into World War II. Made for and about an immigrant population, these movies shed flickering candle light on a lost epoch. Clips from (mostly vanished) reels alternate with *Reds*-style latterday testimony from 'witnesses' — directors like Edgar Ulmer, actors, writers — about the nostalgic force of the old-country *shetl* values. Not mentioned is the fact that assimilated Jewish heads of studios helped to discourage this

folk-cultural material. Hard-core film history around a Mills-and-Boon centre: the melodrama *mattered*.

Next week looks freighted with product. Rapid dismissals, then, of the slick, talkative glibness of another of those American returns, in the Eighties, to Class-of-Sixties reunion successes, all eating their hearts out on screen, hugely relaxed in the well-named **The Big Chill**: I didn't believe a well-written, well-acted syllable of it. As for the latest Francis Ford Coppola bit of wrist-wrestling – a black-and-white fantasy, **Rumble Fish**, about a small-town moron in love with his failed, bikey brother, come gnominically back – words fail me as much as they did the script-writers. □

MUSIC

Andrew Clements

Boxing day

POST-CHRISTMAS torpor lies over the record industry; with all effort expended on fuelling the present-buying spree there is not much left for New Year surprises. At least EMI has its substantial and comprehensive archives to fall back on; there is still a marvellous range of performances from the 1930s and '40s awaiting transfer to LP. 'Arthur Schnabel plays Schubert, Volume 2' follows hard on the first compilation, which included the D major piano sonata. EMI has been canny in assembling these sets, carefully rationing the sonatas between the boxes and bulking them out with occasional pieces. So the new release (EMI RLS1435603, three records) contains both the late A major and B flat sonatas and the Four Impromptus D935, but also a selection of piano duets (with Schnabel's son, Karl Ulrich) and a group of songs (with his wife, Therese Behr-Schnabel).

It is nevertheless the two sonatas that will sell the box. Schubert has become more popular among pianists since Schnabel recorded these performances, and fine versions are available in more truthful and less constrained sound. But both the B flat (recorded in 1939) and A major (1937) sonatas are still out on their own. The B flat in particular seems unsurpassed, effortlessly unfolded with inimitable phrasing and undimmed singing tone. In the A major perhaps the muscularity of, say, a Pollini (in concert at least) or a Serkin is missing; Schnabel links it to the repose of B flat, making the slow movement its centre of emotional gravity. The remaining sides are inevitably something of an anticlimax: the duets are tidy, intelligent accounts of unremarkable music and Mrs Schnabel proves to be an intelligent though limited contralto, with a fine sense of style. Schnabel's contribution to some of the songs – two from *Schwannengesang* and *Erk König* especially – is fascinating, incisively dramatic.

Erk König also ends the second instalment of **Jorge Bolet's** Liszt series, devoted to 12 of the composer's transcriptions of Schubert songs (Decca SXDL 7569). Anyone who expects recompositions along the lines of Liszt's versions of Wagner will be disappointed, for these are done with the maximum of tact and musicality, never exceeding the emotional bounds of the originals. Bolet is a magnificent pianist in this repertoire, with an unerring sense of Liszt's keyboard registration and a technique that carries him through the stiffest challenges with no loss of clarity or sense of line. The stark drama of *Erk König* is the most spectacular, but in the songs from *Die Schöne Mullerin* Liszt succeeds in positively enhancing the poetic resonance of Schubert accompaniments, elaborating the figuration without ever obscuring the vocal line. Such a tired old favourite as *Die Forelle* emerges bright and alive when given this treatment, and Bolet's exquisitely precise playing conveys it perfectly.

Studio recordings from **Martha Argerich** are so rare that it is worth reminding anyone unfamiliar with her playing that she is unquestionably one of the great pianists of her generation (by no means a substandard crop, since it includes Pollini, Barenboim and Ashkenazy), quite irrepressible when on top form. Perhaps because she is an unpredictable, uneven artist, her recordings are a patchwork of concert performance and studio sessions, which give only a partial impression of her range and quality. But a coupling of Schumann, *Kinderszenen* and *Kreisleriana* (Deutsche Grammophon 410 653-1), made under ideal conditions is fascinating. The digital sound conveys her lean, continually varied tone to perfection and in both works there is a sense of settled, deeply considered interpretations perfectly presented. Not every detail is exactly as one would wish; in *Kinderszenen* especially there are some over-generous rubatos that distort the shape of essentially simple statements and a couple of movements taken fractionally too fast. But *Kreisleriana* suits her sensibility to a T; the virtuosity is spell-binding, the fantastic invention is superbly rendered. □

THEATRE

Christopher Edwards

Plaster saint

St Joan
BERNARD SHAW *Olivier*

Shaw must be this century's most over-rated writer – certainly I can never see how the reputation of *St Joan* as a dramatic masterpiece ever came about. Shaw's excuse for my being bored would probably be that I studied him at school . . . 'I lay my eternal curse on whomsoever shall now or at any time hereafter make schoolbooks of my

work and make me hated as Shakespeare is hated'; long winded even in his curses, and for ever making that empty comparison with Shakespeare.

Shaw's preface to the play is interesting and lively. He draws a comparison between Socrates' and Joan's innocence – their essential unconsciousness of why they were not tolerated. He also talks of the 'strange superiority' of certain key historical figures and the fear this quality inspires. Shaw's understanding of Joan – or of Christ or Mahomet – is that of a secular moralist; his 18-year-old Joan is a genius of commonsense, ranged against obtuse established authority. Her religious convictions derive from an unmediated relation with a God whose commands she receives through voices. When told that these come from her imagination she agrees. 'What other judgment can I judge by but my own?' To which the Catholic Church has only one reply: 'THE ASSESSORS (*scandalised*) Oh (*They cannot find words*).'

But Shaw was too skilled a polemicist to reduce the Inquisition to caricature. Her trial was pretty fair and he even cites evidence to suggest that the Ecclesiastical Court which excommunicated her was *pro-Joan*. What Shaw's analysis comes down to is that Joan, and all her kind, will always be persecuted. The play ends on this note after a dream sequence where Joan (rehabilitated and canonised) asks if they would have her back; churchmen and politicians politely leave making their excuses.

All this is quite interesting, only I never actually feel in the theatre that Shaw embodies it with breathing, independent dramatic life. There are numerous surprises in the intellectual positions taken up and defended, but I understand Yeats's dream where Shaw appeared as a sewing machine which ticked and ticked and smiled and smiled.

The apparent reason for Ronald Eyre's production was the availability of an excellent actress ready and willing to tackle Joan. Frances de la Tour captures the power of her innocence very well, that conviction which leaves her baffled when others tell her she is doing wrong. It is, though, hard to see and hear her as a fresh devotee of St Catherine, spontaneously discovering eloquence through faith. The voice is too mature and insistent; it carries a contemporary sense of commitment to a social good. For all the playwright's prosiness his heroine demands a sense of the transcendent.

Of the play's most famous two scenes one succeeds and the other is an unfortunate embarrassment. The first is the accomplished debate between Warwick (Anton Rodgers as a crafty/bluff politician) and Cauchon (Michael Bryant) where expediency nicely draws together Church and State to condemn the Maid. The only flaw here is the presence of the English Chaplain, de Stogumber, although this is not Philip Locke's fault – he injects the role with a demented bulldog bigotry that would have delighted Shaw's puerile anti-English sense of humour. The trial scene flops badly because of Cyril Cusack's painful uncertainty with the Inquisitor's speech. Shaw sug-

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gested a progression from patience and blandness to gravity, and it was sad to see this distinguished old actor fumbling words and rhythms so that a key set piece justifying the Inquisition became unintelligible.

Timothy Spall's Dauphin is a loose-jawed ninny biting his fingers and mincing about as a spoilt ineffectual brat; Mark Wing-Davey rescues Dunois' precious speech to the West Wind with a delicate ironical delivery before going on to create a very dashing Bastard. I found Ilona Sekacz's brassy fanfares ideal for suggesting large exploits off-stage, but the 'spiritual' sounds – dissonant ahhs coming from the rafters – were a bit clichéd. John Gunter's set is for once merely serviceable, although there is a splendid moment when streaming banners of *fleur de lys* part to disclose the soaring interior of Rheims Cathedral. □

TELEVISION

Hugo Williams

Reprisals

DID YOU get your mail order guitar in 1955? Mine looked like a guitar, but never achieved musical status in my hands as the strings were made of barbed wire. 'When you started off you had to have the gaps,' said Richard Stilgoe in *Skiffle* (BBC-2). 'You went "Don't you/rock me/Daddy-O" and when the gaps were down to one second you went professional.' A physics professor remembered how to make a tea-chest bass: 'You made a hole and you pushed in the string through here. You attached it to the broom handle, then you faked out the notes, like this.' It sounded pretty neat and I realised with disgust that I should have entered music at the other end of the scale: 'Good in a week, brilliant in a fortnight,' as an ex-semi-name rhythm guitarist once urged me.

It seems that in 1929 there was a blues sampler with a party sound called *Home Town Skiffle*. 'We didn't know if the skiffle was the party or the music,' said Lonnie Donegan, 'but we liked the word and so we used it. You'd call it r'n'b today, but the word hadn't been invented then.' 'We annoyed the musical establishment,' said Brian Silver of the Vipers. 'They regarded skiffle as a form of musical abuse.' Popular music has always been a system of reprisals and it became clear that most skiffles regarded rock 'n' roll in much the same light. Donegan: 'Rock 'n' roll was a failure on the part of the white boys to imitate black music. There wasn't any black rock 'n' roll.' I must say I'd never heard of gospel in those days. When Lonnie sang 'Allelujah I'm a safe from sin, the good Lord's coming for to save my soul', I thought it was all part of the sound, like 'Wopbaloobop'.

Women – the Salvation Army's Joy-strings for instance – were well into Skiffle,

but lost out to the devil Rock. Beryl Bryden played washboard in Donegan's band: 'One side for rhythm, both for solos, flat on your lap for slow numbers.' But the abiding voice of the period was that of Nancy Whiskey singing 'Freight Train'. 'It was taught to me by a very nice American man going through Hyde Park in a bubble car,' she said. I think he might have stopped, but that was the spirit of skiffle, wasn't it? This was another of those games of TV grandmother's footsteps: a glance over the shoulder to see if any of it has got any closer since we last looked. It has. There's a skiffle revival creeping up on us apparently, in the shape of the '1984 Skiffles' among others. I caught them playing 'Please Y'Self' as if they owned it the other day and made them go back to 1955 and start again with mail order guitars and bleeding fingers.

I wish I could do the same to David Geffen, the 'phenomenally successful' producer of the Eagles, Jackson Browne and Asia to whom Paul Gambaccini was far too polite on *The Other Side of the Tracks* (C4). Geffen is the quintessential West Coast promo man towards whose perfectly judged averageness money flows with the consistency of his artists' treacly music. 'I think good music will always sell,' he told Gambo, articulating the LA credo (but proving himself wrong). His latest video features a junior Liberace with a blow-fringe mouthing the same sort of sentiments in front of a building-sized American flag: clearly a song for the re-election campaign. 'I think the economy will become better and better,' said Geffen. 'More and more people will be buying more and more records.' When Gambo suggested he might be losing touch by marketing only establishment acts, he became haughty. 'We have wonderful new recording artists . . . sold out . . . all over the world . . . smash hit . . . Canada . . . Australia.' Even Geffen's four-year misdiagnosed cancer seemed to have done nothing to modify a remorselessly positive approach to life at the top of the slag-heap.

On and off throughout his life my actor-playwright father was researching a play about his grandfather Dr Jefferies, one of the culprits in the sad story of the *The Fasting Girl* (BBC-2). Now Andrée Melly and Oscar Quitack appear in an admirable tele-play by Paul Ferris. Ferris has rightly decided to describe it as a case of Anglo-Welsh enmity: primitive valley fundamentalism versus know-all metropolitan arrogance. The girl's parents claim she has fasted for a year without any deterioration. She is of a saintly disposition and is said to have healing powers which gain money for the poor family. Candles fill the room. A London physician hears of the case and challenges the family to substantiate its claims. The local doctor, minister and reporter, all with vested interests in the phenomenon,

Among this week's contributors:

RONALD ARONSON's *Dialectics of Disaster: A Preface to Hope* is to be published by Verso next month.

JEREMY REED's 'Surfers' is from *By the Fisheries*, to be published by Cape on 1 March.

take up the challenge, and the tragedy (and allegory) is primed.

We know in advance that the fast is a hoax, otherwise Lletherneuadd would be a shrine like Lourdes, so this wasn't so much a whodunnit? as a whofedher? Is it the father, who treats his beloved daughter as if she were already canonised? The little sister with whom she is so intimate? The docile mother suckling a new child? Or the idiot brother peering through windows? 'The child is deeply religious,' says the minister. 'If there is deception, what can be the motive?' The author has cleverly invented one, giving the story a modern slant in the process: it is a conspiracy of the women in the house to quell the husband's violence. 'Dadda,' says the fasting girl, 'be good to mother.' And the terrified farmer complies. What started as a domestic ruse gets out of control in the greater world of religious and professional rivalry. There is a conspiracy of silence between doctor, family and priest over the girl's worsening condition and after two weeks of observation she is dead. □

WEEKEND COMPETITION

No 2810

Set by A. Boteman

Betjeman's poem about a young executive begins, 'I am a young executive. No cuffs than mine are cleaner; I have a slimline brief-case and I use the firm's Cortina'. Verse, up to ten lines maximum, beginning, 'I am a TV producer/fringe theatre actor/new Tory MP/trade union official/NS competitor . . .', wanted by 9 March.

No 2807

Set by E. O. Parrott

Extracts from TV/radio series scripts incorporating appearances by British politicians.

Report

By PC 49

A strange thing happened to me this week while I was perusing your competition entries. I felt coming over me the unusual sensation of considerable sympathy for our leading politicians. It appears, you see, that the effect of their entry upon the conversation of a normally funny or otherwise engaging scene would be similar to the effect which I seem to have upon the company in the public bar of my local. That is to say, deadening. Dull. Nothing of interest forthcoming. Very demoralising. A Nightingale each for those who disguised their lack of solid information with enough of a sparkle to creep into print.

'Minder' meets Nigel Lawson

Arthur: Er – Mr Lawson, sir – could I 'ave a word? I was just wondering if you could drop a bit of info. my way. Know what I mean?

Terry: You're wasting your time, Arthur.

Arthur: Quiet Terence: I know what I'm doing.

N. Lawson: What sort of 'info'?

Arthur: You give me the nod, how much you're whacking on the old booze, fags, or whatever – I stock up and then see you right for a case or two after the 13th. Get me?

N. Lawson: Not very practical, I'm afraid.

Terry: I told you, didn't I?

Arthur: Now come, Mr L., where's the harm?

billboard

continued
from page 25

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N. Lawson (*walking away*): Thanks for the offer, but I never use the stuff myself.

Arthur: Would you Adam and Eve it? What's he talking about Terry?

Terry: What 'e's whopping the tax on Tuesday.

Arthur: You mean he told you?

Terry: Yeh. Double Glazing.

D. GREY

Howe-di-Howe

Scene 1

Gladys: Hello, campers. Well! What a treat we've got for you tonight. We're all so looking forward to seeing you at the Moles and Dead Sheep Evening in the Hawaiian Ballroom. And there's a free, sacrificial lamb stew for the lucky campers who spot the real dead sheep. Claim your prize from our Entertainments Manager, Sir Geoffrey Howe-brother. Howe-di-Howe!

Campers: Barney Hayhoe!

Scene 2, Sir G's Office

Ted Bovis: But, Geoff, I keep telling you, it's simple. We give them a thousand quid and they give us their civil rights. We can't lose.

Sir G: Well . . . er . . . um . . . but, Ted . . .

Ted Bovis: Oh, Gawd. Tell him, Spike.

Spike: You've done this sort of thing before, Geoff.

Ted Bovis: Exactly. I can see it now. 'From Sir Geoffrey Howe-brother, the man who helped to bring you the three-day week. Come to Maplin's and get rid of those unwanted personal liberties.'

Sir G: Well . . . er . . . um . . . but, Ted . . .

Ted Bovis: Geoff. Can't you say anything except 'But, Ted?'

Sir G: But, Maggie?

MARK TAVENER

The Last of the Summer Wine

Heath, Pym and Stevo are sitting on a wall and kicking their heels

Stevo: Those legs . . . Gurggh!

Heath: Shut up you horrid little man. You need a constructive and adventurous occupation to take your mind off Maggie Batty's legs.

Pym: I don't know about constructive, but his passion for Maggie Batty is adventurous, in my opinion.

Stevo: Cor! And what a carver! You should see her carving.

Heath: I don't want to hear about it.

Pym: Be fair. She is a good carver. You must admit she is a splendid carver.

Heath: When you've been Prime Minister you know there's more to life than carving.

Stevo: Yes, there's wielding a broom. You should see her forearm.

Pym: I have to admit there are things I'd rather see than Maggie Batty's forearm.

Stevo: Like what, for instance?

Pym: Almost anything, really.

Heath shudders, stands to attention and goes into a trance

T. GRIFFITHS

Brookside

Sheila Grant (*replacing net curtain*): 'Ey, that Shirley Williams is 'eadin' over 'ere.

Bobby Grant: I'm sorry, Sheila, but I'm norra-
vin' any social democrats in my 'ouse. That's final.

(Doorbell rings and Shirley is let in)

Shirley: Oh, Mrs Grant, do you think I could borrow a *bouquet garni*? I've got some social democrats coming round for a working lunch on poverty and the beef is just ready to go in the oven.

Sheila: Sorry, luv, we don't 'ave that fancy kind of stuffere. We're a bit working class, see.

Bobby: That's right, Shirley. I suggest you take

your bloody poverty seminars over to the Wirral.

Barry: Array, Dad. Where's your political creativity? You see, Shirl, me Dad's been a knee-jerk Marxist ever since he set foot on the factory floor. I've been tryin' to gerrim to read Kola-kowski for the past five years but it's like banging yer 'ed against a brick wall.

NICHOLAS MURRAY

FIRST PERSON



Jeremy
Lewis

Prunes
v.
crisps

PARTLY THROUGH inertia and partly through a hopeless inability to make up my mind about the burning issues of the day, I've never been a dab hand at championing causes. I enjoy — who doesn't? — the cosy delights of righteous indignation, of tossing my *Telegraph* aside with a snort of baffled rage; but when it comes to organising petitions or knocking on doors or marching about with portable house agents' signs covered with cross, corrective messages, I am but a broken reed. Yet ever since my daughter brought home a circular informing us that unless a certain percentage of parents wanted their children to continue having a cooked lunch in the school canteen (as opposed to taking a packed lunch with them) the school meals service would have to be discontinued, I have been convulsed by the same zest for battle that knights of yore must have felt when confronted by a particularly disagreeable dragon — and now not only is there one damsel to be rescued, but the massed ranks of the Dinner Ladies of England.

I have to admit that, as far as I know, I have never met a dinner lady, either socially or on the job; but, like many parents, I have spotted them in the distance behind heavily steamed-up windows, stout white-coated figures lugging giant saucepans about the school kitchens and wrenching open packets of mushy peas the size of cement bags; and behind the quiet drone of the teacher's voice and the scrape of chalk on blackboard I have heard the clatter of mighty pans and the muffled cry as a ladle as large as a garden spade comes crashing to the ground. Although I always rather relished school food (and have retained an unsophisticated weakness for institutional fare) and felt a certain contempt for those frailer souls who grumbled predictably on about prunes and tapioca, I know that moaning about school food is the birthright of every self-respecting child. Yet the fate of those powerful, red-armed ladies from whom children's legends are made is even now teetering in the balance. And much as we might mutter about hard-hearted governments and penny-

pinching local authorities, the parents themselves are very much to blame.

It's hard to see how anyone benefits from the ending of school meals, apart from potato crisp salesmen and the manufacturers of plastic luncheon boxes. Certainly not the dinner ladies, sent scurrying in the direction of the Job Centre by 'caring' folk who tut-tut about the horrors of unemployment, yet seem unable to equate the pleasures of indignant rhetoric with the melancholy realisation that these fine women may find themselves out of work as a direct result of their inability to take a firm line when their children make the ritual complaint that school meals are 'eggy' and threaten dire consequences if they're not allowed to take packed lunches like everybody else.

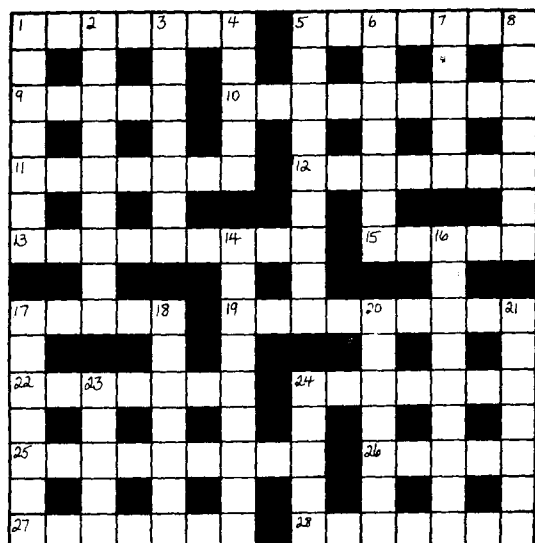
Certainly not the harassed, muddle-headed mothers (often struggling to combine full- or part-time work with looking after their families) who voluntarily make their lives even more complicated and disagreeable by having to remember to stock up their children's lunch-boxes in the mornings and clear up the unappetising, yoghurt-stained remains in the evenings. So brow-beaten by their children are these unfortunate ladies that they fail to realise that equipping their children's lunch-boxes will probably cost them as much (or as little) as the cooked meal they so foolishly abjure.

As for the small folk themselves, even the most khaki stew and water-logged cabbage must be preferable to the teeth-rotting, brain-addling, unnutritional pap of crisps, fizzy drinks, sweets and yet more crisps with which children, left to their own devices, will endlessly and enjoyably stuff themselves. Many parents are too ground down or too benighted to put anything better into their children's packed lunches; those who struggle to make dainty cucumber sandwiches and to add a banana or an apple often find that the sandwiches come home uneaten, looking unpleasantly curled and sweaty, while the banana has been accidentally 'trodden on' or traded in for some criminal concoction made of maize and vegetable oil, the packet of which is blowing about the school yard along with a hundred others, and a rich assortment of sweet papers, Coke tins and various unmentionables. Before long even the conscientious parent throws in the sponge and King Crisp reigns supreme.

Even more than the rest of us, children are slaves to fashion, and packed lunches are thought by the trend-setters to be a good deal more dashing and free-wheeling than the stodgy cooked variety served up the dinner ladies. Once a school has taken the misguided step of allowing children to choose between the two, the writing must be on the wall for the white-coated ladies and for those of us crusty and brutal enough to believe that a cooked lunch, eaten communally, must make for healthier, better tempered and altogether more sociable children. At a time when many people, children included, are feeling the full effects of the recession, voting to do away with school lunches seems a very sad, very stupid and utterly unnecessary form of self-inflicted wound. □

Weekend Crossword 1431

PRIZES: £5 Book Tokens for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1431, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, by first post 6 March.



Name _____

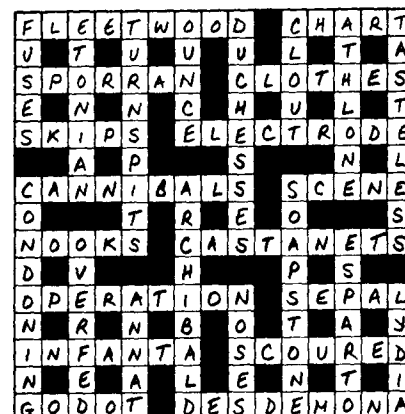
Address _____

ACROSS

1. River produces the difficulty I study (7)
5. Red rose used to make screen (7)
9. Measure range (5)
10. Search in the British Museum for a city (9)
11. Following an article I get married to produce life (7)
12. Soldier sees nothing in saint's opponent (7)
13. In case mouth is something seen on face (9)
15. Support for artists who go into retirement before fifty (5)
17. The second favourites make a comeback, showing their paces (5)
19. Edition in colour on legal proceedings (9)
22. Take me back with a couple to cuddle (7)
24. Seeming to be frightened in royal role (7)
25. She cohabits and keeps company with a child among the muses (9)
26. Butterfly, for example (5)
27. Get fell in here, starting with this (4,3)
28. Made appointment with testy doctor (7)
7. Hidden to make the greyhound race (5)
8. For a generation minor routes have gone up on either side of the main road (7)
14. Reprimanding for worrying about a favourite (9)
16. Pretended one is put in the earth and lives with an insect (9)
17. Means of copying material for clients (7)
18. Animal about to drag up a bird (7)
20. Cautious about it being kindness (7)
21. Badly eroding what is of African character (7)
23. Where to forbid very loud music? (5)
24. Search featured in a unique story (5)

SET SQUARE

Solution to 1429



Prizewinners to 1429

A. Menarry (Darlington)
R. E. Shelley (Leamington Spa)
Baldur Simonarson (Reykjavik, Iceland)

DOWN

1. Restore through a miracle in conversion (7)
2. Happiness is to make one's getaway before it is possibly due (9)
3. The intermediary has to study adroitness in dealing with others (7)
4. Head which appears on the French coin (5)
5. Puritan who has a lot of drinks with froth on (9)
6. Rush round madly in an overtime racket (7)

★ Classified Ads ★ Phone 01-251 5487 ★

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HOSPITALITY & COMFORT Welsh Hills. Dinner, B&B £63 p.w. Bonner, Bron Fadog, Trefriw, LL27 0QA. Tel. Llanrwst (0492) 640566.

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SELF-CONTAINED 1 bed. flat, c.h., in quiet Islington Square, available for 6/10 months. £65 p.w. 01-607 6265.

ACCOMMODATION WANTED

AMERICAN POSTGRADUATE Cambridge couple, urgently seeks accommodation, house/flat minding or reasonable rent, min. 6 months, while pursuing research British Museum. Mr Lawrence, Box 756, Kings College, Cambridge. Tel. (0223) 66853.

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APPOINTMENTS

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL requires an

ASSISTANT TO THE REGIONAL LIAISON OFFICER FOR ASIA

The Regional Liaison Officer is responsible for the development of Amnesty International in Asia. The Assistant's duties include liaison with Amnesty International's sections, groups and individual members and subscribers in Asia and providing administrative support to the Regional Liaison Officer who spends several months each year in Asia.

Candidates must have a good background knowledge of Asia. Fluent English. Good typing and at least three years' relevant work experience essential.

Staff are required to work with new technology according to the appropriate agreement.

Salary £8,246 per annum (index-linked)

For a detailed job specification and application form send a large stamped addressed envelope to:

The Personnel Office, Amnesty International, 1 Easton Street, London WC1X 8DJ or ring 01-833 1771 ext 5144 or 5147.

Closing date for the return of completed application forms: 30 MARCH, 1984



amnesty international

SCOTTISH WAR ON WANT and WAR ON WANT SEEK

PART TIME OFFICER

To work in Scottish War on Want Glasgow office responsible for campaigning, fundraising, membership recruitment and administration.

Scottish War on Want is a development organisation closely linked to War on Want.

SALARY: £8,475 p.a. pro rata

HOURS: Equivalent to 3 days per week

For Job Description and Application Form please send see to:



The Personnel Office
Scottish War on Want
Centrepeace
143 Stockwell Street
Glasgow G1

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS: 23 MARCH, 1984

THE BLACKIE

is looking for full-time members of staff: able to share responsibility and administration for cultural projects; work with young people; stand long hours and the inner city; commit themselves 12 months or more.

We offer accommodation, a small wage - and endless opportunities to learn and create.

Send 25p in stamps for information and application form to:

Great George's Community Cultural Project (The Blackie), Great George Street, Liverpool 1. Tel: 051-709 5109.

GREATER LONDON REGIONAL ORGANISER

A small specialist Trade Union in the Licensed Trade is seeking a Greater London Regional Organiser.

Please apply to the undersigned for an application form:

Mr David T. Carter, National Secretary, NALHM, 9 Coombe Lane, Raynes Park, London SW20 8NE.

Marked 'Private and Confidential'

CLOSING DATE for receipt of completed application forms is First Post - Friday 16 March 1984.

OV SELECTION CATERERS for the more mature person as well as graduates and 'A' level students with typing and office skills. Phone Odette Veazey, OV Selection (Emp. Agt.) Abford House, 15 Wilton Road, London, SW1V 1LT. 01-828 8345.

THE LABOUR PARTY

requires

RESEARCH OFFICER (based in Glasgow)

(The post will last until the end of July 1985)

Applicants should have a wide interest in and knowledge of economic, industrial, social and political affairs in Scotland. The work involves the preparation of research, policy and other papers for the Scottish Council of the Party - and experience in the preparation of such papers, and background briefing and campaign information, will be of considerable advantage. An Honours degree, though not essential, would also be an advantage.

Salary range: £8,905-£10,525 p.a., depending on appropriate experience in a similar capacity.

RESEARCH OFFICER (based at Head Office)

The major area of responsibility for this post will concern housing. Duties will include the preparation of research papers, the provision of background and campaign information to all sections of the Party and the servicing of appropriate committees and groups established by the National Executive Committee. Applicants must therefore have a good understanding and knowledge of housing issues - and experience in preparing papers and briefing on this key area of policy. An Honours degree, though not essential, would be an advantage.

In addition, the post will also cover related issues in such fields as construction, social policy, environment and planning - subject to the continuing review of responsibilities within the department.

Salary range: £10,090-£11,710 p.a., depending on appropriate experience in a similar capacity.

Applicants for these posts must be members of the Labour Party and a background of activity in the Party and the wider Labour movement would be of considerable advantage.

Application forms and conditions of employment for both these posts can be obtained from: The Administrative and Personnel Officer, The Labour Party, 150 Walworth Road, London, SE17 1JT (tel. 01-703 0833) and should be returned by no later than FRIDAY, 9 MARCH, 1984.

Social Strategy for the Eighties Strathclyde Community Business Ltd.

Head of Unit

Salary Scale: £16,536 - £17,736

The promotion of this project within Strathclyde region is unique and exciting and offers an outstanding challenge to all parties concerned.

Applications are invited for the above newly created post located in Glasgow.

The Strathclyde Community Business Unit, which will become operational in April 1984, is a fully independent organisation offering a 'one door' comprehensive financial, development and advisory service for community business enterprises throughout the Strathclyde region.

The successful candidate will be responsible to a Board, comprising representatives of the Regional and District Councils and various public agencies involved, for the smooth and efficient operation of the Unit of 14 staff, whose skills will include financial and business management, marketing, counselling, social and community development.

Applicants should have a proven record in at least one of these disciplines and a strong appreciation of the potentials and aims of Community Business. It is intended that the appointment be for an initial period of three years with possible extension to five.

Application forms and further details of the post and the Unit are available from:

The Director of Manpower Services,
Strathclyde Regional Council,
Strathclyde House 2, 20 India Street, Glasgow

Completed applications should be returned by Monday 12th March.

**WAR
ON
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ACCOUNTS ADMINISTRATOR

To work in small but busy finance office of development agency with current turnover of c.£1.5 million p.a.

Candidates should be familiar with the day-to-day work of a finance office and should have a strong background in accounting/book-keeping; although initial support will be provided the person recruited should be capable of working independently and without supervision. **SALARY: £8,475 p.a.**

For Job Description and Application Form please send s.a.e. to:

The Personnel Office, War on Want
467 Caledonian Road, London N7 9BE

Closing date for applications
23 March, 1984

**WAR
ON
WANT**

NCCL NEEDS Voluntary Part-Time Help in the following areas: Publications Dispatch: Checking and sending books and pamphlets to mail order customers. Newspaper Cutting: Marking and cutting newspapers and magazines. Membership: Filing and checking subscriptions. Some typing. All of these would particularly suit active retired people who can come into NCCL's Southwark offices on two or three mornings or afternoons per week. The office is a minute's walk from Borough station (Northern Line) and close to many bus routes. We can't offer any pay, but we do provide friendly people, plenty of tea and coffee, travelling expenses and luncheon vouchers. Please contact Charles Foster or Colin Neilson at National Council for Civil Liberties, 21 Tabard Street, London SE1 4LA (Telephone 01-403 3888).

BOOKS/ PUBLICATIONS

REVIEW COPIES and other books in fine condition bought and sold by Vermilion Books, 57 Red Lion St, London WC1. Tel: 01-242 5822.

TOUGH PUZZLES — a new subscription-only magazine for puzzle addicts, who enjoy mental gymnastics and lateral thinking. It's full of ingenious deductive puzzles, codes, brain-teasers and other instruments of torment. For sample copy send two 12½p stamps to (TPC 1) BEAP Ltd, 106 Hammersmith Grove, London W6 7HB.

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School of Peace Studies

RESEARCH STUDENTSHIP

Applications are invited from suitably qualified graduates to pursue research for a Ph.D on strategies for defence conversion in Britain. The Project title is:

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Further details and application forms from: Dr T. Woodhouse, School of Peace Studies, University of Bradford, West Yorkshire BD7 1DP. Closing date: 30 March, 1984.

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SALARIED PERSONS Postal Loans Ltd. Loans from £50. 175 Regent Street, W1. For written quote apply: Tel. 01-734 1974.

POLITICAL PUBLICATIONS

New Socialist

Now! March-April

Neil Kinnock: New Deal for Europe

Raymond Williams: Splits, Pacts, and Coalitions

David Held and John Keane: Taking 'liberty' from the Right

Sue Lees: Nice Girls Don't (Still)

Joan Smith: Where the Grass is Greenham

Farrukh Dhondy: All the Raj

Lynda Birke: Outgrowing Selfish Genes

Tony Hood: Liverpool's Last Stand

70p from your newsagent or radical bookshop
Subscription £4.20 inland, £7.20 overseas.

New Socialist, 150 Walworth Road
London SE17 1JT

LISTINGS

FRI 24 FEBRUARY

NEWCASTLE Labour Party Rally Eldon Square Leisure Centre 7pm. Spkrs. Neil Kinnock, Roy Hattersley.

SAT 25 FEBRUARY

BATTERSEA CND Jumble Sale 2.30pm St Andrew's United Reformed Church Hall, Battersea Rise, SW11. Adm. 10p. Details: Sue Jones 328 8989 x 2460 (day) 228 5144 (eves). Org. Battersea CND.

BIRMINGHAM 'Turn Left in Kings Heath & Moseley' — a festival of political debate and displays sponsored by 'Marxism Today'. Spkrs Martin Jacques, Meg Beresford. 10-5pm Adm. £2/E1 unwaged. Centre 13, School Rd, Moseley, Birmingham B13. Details & tickets: Joan Turley, 27 Geddesby Rd, Birmingham B14 7EX.

SAT 25 FEBRUARY

LONDON 'Towards a Police State' — day event 2pm-11pm Chats Palace, 42 Brooksbys Walk, E9. Adm. £1 (day)/£1.50 (eve.), half price unemployed. Details & tickets in advance: Hackney Campaign Against the Police Bill, 50 Rectory Rd, N16. 01-249 8334.

MANCHESTER Anti-Trident Convention in Free Trade Hall. 11am-5pm. Spkrs, workshops, videos, displays. Details: Anti-Trident Campaign, 420 Sauchiehall St, Glasgow G2. 041-332 3141.

LONDON Meeting to Relaunch 'The Leveller', 2pm Room 2 ASTMS Head Office, 79 Camden Rd, NW1. Details: 01-274 2288.

LONDON Chile Solidarity AGM 10.30am-4.30pm Camden Town Hall, Euston Rd, NW1. Creche/food. Details: Helen Garner 01-272 4928.

SUN 26 FEBRUARY

LONDON 'Anglo-Jewry today' seminar 10am-5.30pm. Spkrs: Dr Barry Kosmin 'Class and Anglo-Jewry', Dr Geoffrey Alderman 'Jews in British Politics', Leon Yudkin 'Jews in British Literature'. Org. MAPAM, 37 Broadhurst Gdns NW6 01-328 2554.

MON 27 FEBRUARY

ISLINGTON 'Police & Criminal Evidence Bill' — briefing meeting 7.30pm Islington Town Hall, Upper St, N1. Details: 01-272 7823/4 (Police Monitoring Grp) 01-226 4488 x 275/277 (Police Ctee. Support Unit).

LAMBETH 'The Tories and the Unions' — on Collision Course' discn 7.30pm Lambeth Town Hall, rm. 121. Spkr: John Lloyd Labour correspondent Financial Times. Details: S. London Labour Co-ordinating Committee, 28 Morvel Rd, SW2 01-733 0590.

LONDON 'Has overseas development hurt women's rights?' — Talk and discn with Barbara Rogers and other spkrs. 5.45pm DDI, 10 Percy St, W1. Details: Georgina Ashworth, CHANGE, 29 St James St, WC1. 01-405 3601.

LONDON 'Talking History', GLC Peace Year film by H. O. Nazareth, followed by discn chaired by Fred Halliday. 7pm ICA Cinema, The Mall, SW1. Tickets £1.40, box office 01-930 3647. Spkrs incl C. L. R. James, Joan Ruddock, Peter Bottomley MP.

EALING Launch meeting for Ealing 'Defend London Campaign'. Spkrs Gerald Kaufman MP, George Tremlett (Tory GLC), Adrian Slade (GLC Lib.). 7.30pm Ealing Town Hall, New Broadway, W5.

TUES 28 FEBRUARY

LONDON 'Speak Out for Irish Freedom!' public meeting. Spkrs. Jeremy Corbyn MP, Keith Thompson Irish Freedom Movement. 7.45pm Holborn Library, Theobalds Rd, WC1. Details: Irish Freedom Movement 01-274 3951.

LONDON 'Understanding and shaping the Environment' careers forum for unemployed young people 2-4.30pm Polytechnic of North London, Holloway, N7. Adm. free/tea. Details: 01-507 2789 x 2029.

WIMBLEDON 'The Russians' — a Quaker's View. Spkr Mrs Ray Hainton. 8pm Drake House, St Georges Rd Adm. free. Org. Wimbledon Disarmament Coalition, 66 Lambton Rd, Raynes Pk, SW20.

Sorry, but we can't accept entries over the phone. Entries must be received by Friday preceding issue date. We reserve the right to exclude items without giving reasons and are not responsible for errors. Space is strictly limited so if you definitely want your item to appear, we suggest you book it as an ad. under the appropriate classified heading. See main heading for rates, etc.

LONDON 'The Case for a Nuclear Freeze' Dr Andy Haines, founder member of Medical Campaign against Nuclear Weapons plus film: 'A Guide to Armageddon'. 8.15pm Inter-Action, Wilkin St, NW5. Org. Kentish Town Freeze Now Group.

LONDON 'Or shall we die?' — anti-nuclear oratorio by Michael Berkeley and Ian McEwan. LSO and Chorus at the Barbican. Tickets £2.50-£8, grp. discounts and student stand-by. Box Office. 01-638 8891/628 8795.

WED 29 FEBRUARY

BIRMINGHAM 'Freedom of Information Policies for Information Age Professions in 1984' free day conf. 10am-4pm Birmingham & Midland Inst. Conference Centre, Margaret St. Names to: Peter Keenan, Assoc. of Asst. Librarians, the Library, UWIST, PO Box 94, Cardiff. 0222 42489.

LONDON 'Return to Haifa' film premiere 7pm University of London Union, Malet St, WC1. plus talk and discn. with director Kassem Hawal. Org. Palestine Solidarity Campaign.

THURS 1 MARCH

LONDON 'Trident'. Spkr Duncan Rees, 8pm Tetherdown Hall, Tetherdown, Muswell Hill, N10. Adm. free. Org. CND Muswell Hill. J. Morley 01-889 0571

FRI 2 MARCH

CROYDON 'Strength in numbers' meeting for unorganised workers and trades unionists. Spkrs Roy Grantham, Gen. Sec. APEX, Tom Sawyer, Dept. Gen. Sec. NUPE. 8pm Ruskin House, Coombe Rd. Details: Croydon TUC Support Unit 01-684 4907.

LONDON Cabaret Benefit for Greenham Common, 7.30pm Chat's Palace, Brooksbys Walk, Homerton, E8. Tickets £2.50/£1.50 unwaged.

SAT 3 MARCH

SHEFFIELD March against bans on Irish Solidarity, against Sheffield Council's ban on Irish meetings and demonstrations and against new Prevention of Terrorism Bill. Assemble 1pm Caborn Corner, Carlisle St. Details and transport: Irish Freedom Movement BM IFM, London, WC1N 3XX 01-274 3951.

YORK 'Women and the Family' 3rd in series of day schools for women and men. Talks, film, bkstall. Alcuin Rm, College of Ripon & York St. John, Lord Mayor's Walk. 10am-4pm. Register 9.30am £2/E1 unwaged. Creche. No facilities for disabled. Details: Trish Newton York 56771/Pat Lyons Ripon 2691 x 203.

OXFORD 'Arab-Israeli conflict and the Arms Race' Day conf. 10.30am-5.30pm. Adm. free. Bernard Sunley Hall, St Catherine's College. Spkrs incl Ahmed Khalidi (Centre for Strategic Studies), Frank Barnaby (Arms expert), Patrick Seale (Observer), Claudia Wright (Washington corres. New Statesman). Details: Robert Mabro, St Anthony's College.

FORTHCOMING

5 MAR LONDON 1984 Jose Marti International Work Brigade to Cuba introductory meeting 7.30pm County Hall, SE1. Details: Britain-Cuba Resource Centre (Brigade), c/o 113 Burton Rd, SW9.

6 MAR LONDON 'Is the Large Group an Orange Balloon' discn. of diagnostic, therapeutic, social value of the Community meeting of the Messenger House Trust. Spkr. Dr. Josephine Lomax Simpson, founder. 7.30pm Penfold Centre, 1 Neville Gill Close, SW18 (rear Arndale Centre). Adm. free, tea/coffee, collection. Details WAMH, 3 Brodrick Rd, SW17

7 MAR LONDON First British tour by jazz musicians from Soviet Union. The Ganelin Trio. Pre-concert talk 6.15pm, starts 7.30pm Bloomsbury Theatre, Gordon St, WC1. Tickets £3.50/£2 unwaged. Bkings: 01-387 9629.

7 MAR BIRMINGHAM Bruce Kent 7.30pm JCR, Polytechnic, Westbourne Rd, Edgbaston followed by CND benefit. Org: WMCND.

8 MAR LIVERPOOL 'Reclaim the Night' march on International Women's Day. Details: Sue, The Women's Centre, c/o Riello Community Centre, 70 Upper Parliament St, Liverpool 8. 051-263 3657.

EVENTS

GREENPEACE EASTER BIKE RIDE. GREYNA GREEN TO ULVERSTON, 20-22 April. Details: Bike Events, PO Box 75, Bath, Avon.

GROUPS/MEETINGS

THEOSOPHY: S.a.e. for free pamphlets, book list, programme of activities. Public Talk Sunday 26 Feb. 8 p.m. Informal Q/A meeting 'Man Mortal and Immortal'. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AL.

German Historical Institute, London

Tuesday, 28 February, 5pm

Dr Gerd Krumeich (Düsseldorf)

Poincaré and the French Government in the July Crisis of 1914

17 Bloomsbury Square
London WC1A 2LP
01-404 5486

Tea from 4.30pm
Seminar starts 5pm

IMPORTANT NOTICE

THE RICHMOND FELLOWSHIP

for
MENTAL WELFARE AND REHABILITATION

SILVER JUBILEE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

on
'Mental Health and the Community'
16-18 July 1984
London UK

Details can be obtained by application to:

The Information Officer
Richmond Fellowship
8 Addison Road, London W14 8DL
Tel: 01-603 6373



POVERTY DAY CONFERENCE

Director:
Peter Townsend
SATURDAY 10 MARCH 1984

Camden Town Hall
Euston Road, London NW1

Regional and class inequalities in Europe have been growing and an effective counterbalancing European social policy has failed to develop. This day conference timed to coincide with the publication of an important book, will examine the lessons to be learned from a comparative analysis of poverty in European countries and their responses. Workshops will consider unemployment and low pay, family policies, and social security and the elderly, and the seminar will consider how Labour's attack on poverty can be carried into the European elections.

Please send me:
details of the Poverty in Europe Seminar ☐

details of Fabian Society membership ☐

Name:

Address:

FABIAN SOCIETY
11 Bartmouth Street, London SW1H 9BN

IS YOURS A CHRISTIAN FAMILY? Are you disillusioned with a life that doesn't allow you to live fully as a Christian? Would you and your family like to help to start a caring and sharing community in which the value of family life, and of individual solitude, would be respected? Would you like to be involved in Christian social work in the wider community? Spend Easter on the I.O.W. in fellowship and discussion with other like-minded Christians. Write **NOW**, giving information about yourselves and your children, to: Jean Goddard, Plovers Barrow, School Road, Nomanland, Salisbury, Wilts SP5 2BY. Tel: Romsey 390 455. There could also be room for a few single Christians for both the weekend and in the community. No-one will be expected to make an immediate commitment.

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ARE YOU a lively minded individual, 18-80 enjoying the arts, discussions, conferences, rambles, dancing? The Progressive League caters for Mind, Body and Intellectual Stimulus. And it's so cheap. Ring 01-452 8358.

ATTRACTIVE, PROFESSIONAL man (58), divorced, loves arts, seeks attractive, intelligent, sensual, non-smoking woman, slim-medium, any race/circumstances, for warm friendship/enjoyments, preferably London/surrounding areas. Box 7582.

ATTRACTIVE, PROFESSIONAL woman, presently based London, mid 30s, seeks educated man. Wide range of interests including music, opera, theatre, sports. All letters, photos returned. Box 7682.

ACTIVE AUTHOR (modest success), 67, wishes adopt daughter, 30-45 (marital status immaterial). Home near London if required. Genuine. Correspond first. Box 7687.

ATTRACTIVE LADY, practical, fun-loving, widely travelled, loves classical music, theatre, seeks intelligent, middle-aged male, for warm friendship. Photo appreciated. Box 7532.

ATTRACTIVE, TYNESIDE teacher, divorced, 48, seeks unattached, professional gentleman, in his fifties, for sincere friendship. Interested in music, the arts, dancing, cooking, etc. Box 7673.

ATTRACTIVE, SLIM, outgoing, intelligent female, Jewish (N/O), interests include theatre, cinema, London/Essex border, seeks stable friendship, humorous, personable, tallish, settled male, 36/43. Box 7702.

AVON AREA. Attractive woman, forties, professional background, would like to meet professional man, similar age. Box 7685.

BALD, BEARDED, bespectacled graduate, 42, divorced, not wealthy, marooned in Luton, seeks woman to be friend and lover. Likes music, walking, books, history. Box 7662.

BLACK GAY male, 35, 5ft 7ins, London based, non-scene, professional, intellectual interests, seeks friend, 21-35, for caring relationship. Box 7699.

CARIBBEAN GRADUATE seeks a very well educated female, under 36, unattached, sociable, adaptable, compromising who enjoys music/sport. (ALA). Box 7616.

CARING, GENTLE, romantic, unattached, educated man, travelled, many interests, enjoying theatre, cinema, music, seeks warm female, 40s, for fun, friendship, London. Phone number. Box 7711.

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DISCREET BISEXUAL man, 28, seeks active, cultured, older friend to enliven occasional West London visits. Meet for a drink perhaps. Box 7677.

DIVORCEE, early 30s, professional, many cultural interests, 5ft 7ins, seeks male companion, to share leisure interests. Sheffield area. Box 7710.

DOCTOR'S WIDOW, attractive, mature, would like to hear from pleasant, interesting, unattached gentleman, between 48-60. Living in Surrey/London area. Box 7657.

DYSLEXIC YEOMAN seeks zany, tarty-in-bed, non-smoking female, to build loving life with. At 52, on dole, mum-lumbered, it could be tough. I'm adaptable, slim. Possible jackpot with play. One promise, to be tender and passionate. Beauteous rewards can be ours! Box 7689.

FAT OLD MUM, ten years on, now slimmer, seasoned 'pond skimmer', seeks further stagions to enliven. It's spring again. Let's sing again. Box 7659.

FEMALE GRADUATE, 36, tallish, no uglier than most. Separated, divorcing. I need a nice patient, intelligent man. All letters answered. Box 7629.

GENUINE FRIENDSHIP? Divorced arts lecturer, ex-public school, moving in top circles, kind, worldly, out-going, idealistic, tall, member SDP. Would lady, 30ish, feminine, similar background, valuing friendship, please correspond, view meeting? (London). Box 7408.

GUCCI SOCIALIST who combines art and business, wishes to meet arts loving and kind woman, with sense of fun, 28-38 years old. Box 7700.

GAY GUY, 32, North London, with dog, slim and told attractive, vegetarian, smoker, with sense of humour. I'm socialist, working class, and interests include most types of music, movies, books - and trying to keep cheerful in the 'horrible 80s'. Like to meet bloke, active, 30-45 working class (?), who would be interested in something long-term. Box 7683.

I'M SINGLE, female, 26, socialist, SW/London. Into CND, Guinness, concerts, friendship/love, smoker. **YOUR MALE**, liberated, left, warm, single and a little older? Box 7712.

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LIVELY, INDEPENDENT, creative woman, seeks mature, intelligent, sensual man, 45-55, for warm, respectful relationship. Non-smoking, slender, solvent, assertive, peaceful person preferred. London/Bucks. Box 7709.

LONDON MAN, 40, single, Continental background, enjoys dining-out, countryside, etc., seeks affectionate young woman, for loving relationship. Photo appreciated. Box 7667.

MALE, MID-FORTIES, 5ft 6ins, graduate, former service officer, living in beautiful farmhouse in Welsh National Park, seeks weekend (or longer) female companion. Interests include: country pursuits, classical music, reading, log fires, good food. Box 7655.

MALE, STUDENT, 5ft 8ins, Indian, mature outlook, would like to meet lady, mature, pleasant nature. Status immaterial, view friendship. Photo please, returned. E./London. Box 7676.

MANCHESTER PROF. lady, tired of same social scene, would like to extend her horizons, pref. with intelligent male, 35-45. Interests travel, reading, good food, films, opera. Box 7665.

MID-PENNINE woman, 30, strong, independent and busy, seeks ditto man, 30-40, for occasional, loose encounters. Non-smoker, non-macho, non-wimp. Box 7678.

NON-SMOKING, good-humoured, interesting man friend/travelling companion (perhaps partner), 55-65, wanted by West-country based woman. Loves poetry, landscape, people, in fact, life. Box 7675.

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PRESENTABLE, TALL woman, 52, long-divorced, uncomplicated, S. Bucks home, seeks personable, unattached, solvent, middle-aged man, with sense of humour, for genuine caring relationship. Box 7672.

PROFESSIONAL LADY, 39, rather unacademic academic, interests social, psychological, political, spiritual, Piscean, no ties, seeks warm, intelligent man, Yorkshire, for close relationship. Box 7681.

SCOTSMAN, 38, well-read, widely travelled, varied interests, temporary invalid, seeks correspondence with interesting people anywhere on anything. All letters answered. Box 7658.

SEEKING MAN: 40s-50ish, unattached, non-smoker, leftish, flexible mind, for make it up as we go along liaison. I'm 40ish, like reading, talking, dancing. Box 7660.

SHY, MALE, clichéd, intellectual, libertarian, leftist student (29), seeks a Bristol-based woman, who follows her own clichés. PS my name is John. Box 7679.

SMALL, BLONDE, independent, single woman, 37, wishes to meet man roughly same age, civilised, sensitive, solvent, interested in arts, for friendship. London. Box 7671.

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SUCCESSFUL AUTHOR, feminine, 50-ish, interested music, literature, art, France, Russia, Scandinavia, travelling, philosophy, seeks super-intelligent, successful male penfriend. Please no authors manque. Box 7701.

TALL, SLIM, good looking professional male, 41, lively mind and body, two young children, politically involved, sensitive and supporting, northern humour, wine, travel and country walks, seeks attractive partner (f.), similarly disposed, Oxon/Berks/Herts/London. Box 7688.

TED MAN, 40, tall, slim, affectionate, sensual, vegetarian, non-smoker, seeks a slim, attractive woman, for warm, close, discrete relationship. Mid Herts. Photo appreciated Box 7680.

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YOUNG IRANIAN, 28, self-employed, would like to meet slim, attractive young lady Greater Manchester area. Photograph appreciated and returned. Box 7708.